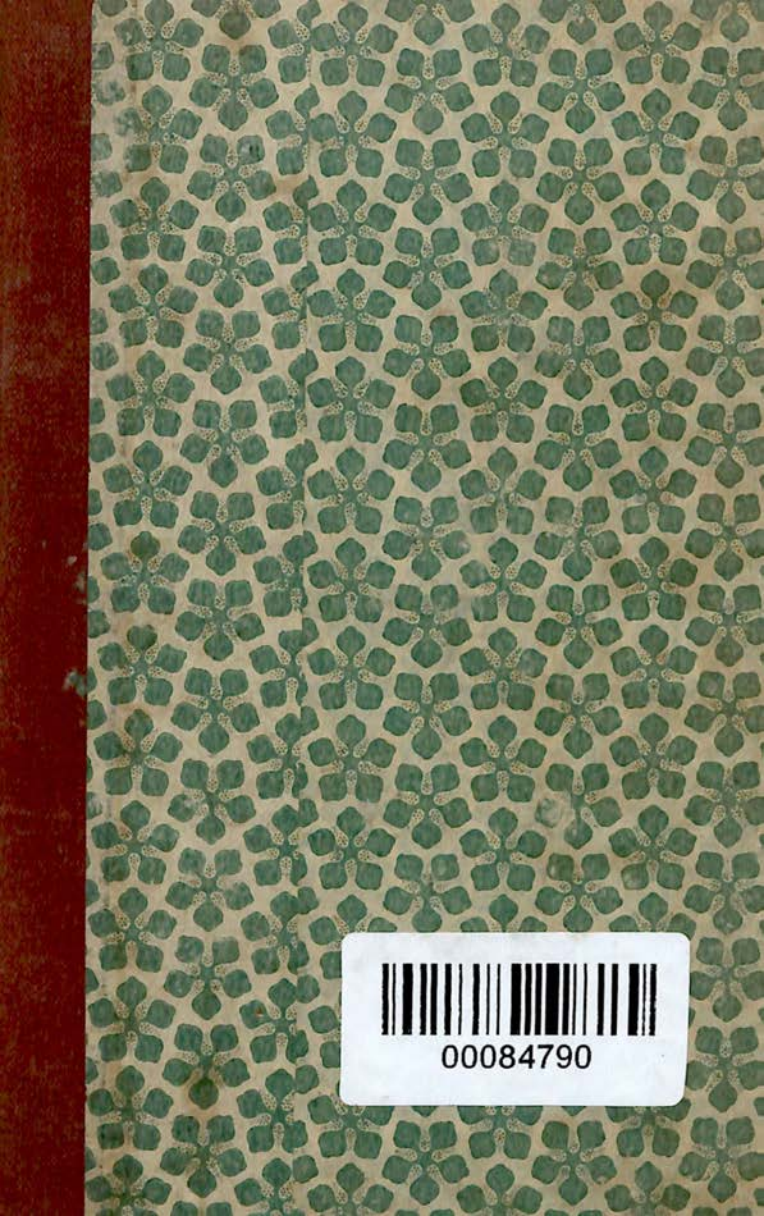
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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

EGYPT:

BY

THE BARONESS VON MINUTOLI.

84790

WITH A PORTRAIT OF MAHOMET ALI PACHA.

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PREFACE.

So much has been written upon Egypt within these few years, that it may appear presumptuous in a female to think of adding to the number of books of travels in the ancient dominions of the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies. But if the Recollections which I offer to the public in the following pages, do not tend to enrich Science and Archæology, they may perhaps interest persons of my own sex, who, when they learn that a woman has visited, under fortunate auspices, those distant regions as far as the tropic, will not be averse to follow her in excursions, and to accompany her in the contemplation of so many wonders of ancient civilization.

The following are the circumstances which gave occasion to this journey, and which I will state in a few words. My husband, adding to the love of the sciences and the study of antiquities, a very natural desire to visit Egypt, which was the first country in the career of civilization, resolved to take advantage of the happy influence which the power of Mahomet Ali exercises in that country. His liberal and enlightened government now enables European travellers to explore that country with the most perfect security. The moment appeared the more favourable, as the political horizon of the Ottoman empire in 1819 and 1820, did not yet announce those storms which were soon to break out, and which in the sequel prevented the execution of the original plan of our tour, which included not only Egypt, but the Holy Land, Syria, part of Asia Minor and Greece.

All these considerations smoothed the difficul-

ties which I should have felt under any other circumstances, in accompanying my husband on this distant pilgrimage, and I readily acceded to the first proposal which he made to that effect, happy to avoid a separation painful to my heart, and to gratify the extreme desire which I always had to be acquainted with remote countries.

Not being prepared, however, for this journey, which I undertook a short time after my marriage, I had, like the generality of women who live in the bustle of the great world, but very superficial notions of the countries I was going to visit. I therefore felt the necessity of making up for this deficiency by the assistance of my husband's library, and during our voyage by sea and our expedition in Upper Egypt, I diligently read Herodotus, Volney, Denon, Hamilton, and several other authors, whose works were very useful to me, by extending and rectifying my ideas and enhancing the interest I took in the scenes I was to view.

I did not, however, write down anything but a few notes during my travels; and after my return to Europe a long and severe illness and several journeys prevented me from committing to paper the principal events of this journey and the impressions they made upon me; and it is not till three years after leaving Egypt that, encouraged by my husband, I have arranged the Recollections contained in the following pages.

NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE Author's preface having sufficiently explained the origin and nature of the Work here submitted to the public, the Translator deems it unnecessary to make any additional observation, or to say anything in favour of it, further than to express her hope that it may be as well received in England as it has been on the Continent. But as the name of Mahomet Ali, the present governor of Egypt, whose portrait is prefixed to this Volume, so frequently occurs, it has been thought that a few lines respecting so extraordinary a character would be agreeable to the reader. The following passage is accordingly extracted from the splendid work

published by Baron Minutoli, the husband of the Author, of which no translation has appeared in the English language.

"Mahomet Ali Pacha was born at Cavalla, a village in Ancient Macedonia; and is now about fifty-nine years of age. He is well made, and of the middle size, and has black animated eyes, which are always in motion. An affection of the lungs, under which he sometimes evidently labours, is not the effect of poison administered to him, as I was at first assured, but is said to have been caused by the great exertions with which he maintained, with only nine hundred men, a victorious combat against forty thousand Arabs. He speaks only Arabic and Turkish, and is wholly unacquainted with any of the European languages.

"His early education was much neglected. It was not till he was Pacha that he learnt to read and write; he is solely indebted to superior natural talents for his extraordinary success. His

career was not promising till the year 1800, when he was made Bim Baschi in the army of the Grand Vizir; on the taking of El Arisch he was appointed Bulak Baschi, and was afterwards raised to the rank of Ser Tschisme under Mahomet Khosru Pacha, who was appointed Pacha of Egypt by the Sublime Porte.

" In 1804 he besieged Khosru's successor, Khourschid Pacha, in the citadel of Cairo, and in the following year succeeded him in his office, after having, with the assistance of his faithful Albanians, expelled the Mamelukes from that capital. But his dominion was not fully confirmed till 1811; on the first of May of which year he entirely annihilated the surviving Mamelukes, who continued to contrive new plots, and did not dissemble that they still considered themselves as the lawful masters of Egypt, which they had so long unjustly usurped and oppressed. This action has been represented as an instance of sanguinary perfidy, but the safety

of the province was at stake, and the testimony of credible and respectable persons entirely acquits, Mahomet Ali from the reproach of cruelty.

"From this period the prosperity of Egypt, and its security against internal and external enemies, has been the invariable object of his exertions, and it is almost inconceivable how much he has undertaken, and in most instances successfully accomplished."

Several anecdotes illustrative of his character will also be found in the following Recollections.

S. H. L.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF EGYPT.

CHAPTER I.

Arrival at Alexandria—Stay in that City—Society—Character of several distinguished Men.

On the 7th of September, 1820, after a voyage of three weeks, I was informed that we were approaching the coast of Africa. At this news I hastened upon deck; but that country, which I so much longed to see, appeared only like a faint cloud on the verge of the horizon. However, we were drawing nearer to it, and I began to distinguish the objects on shore: on the left of the city, the palace and the harem of the Pacha; and on the right, the

column of Severus, and one of the obelisks called Cleopatra's Needles. At length we entered the port, which was covered with a forest of masts, decorated with the colours of different commercial nations. This scene, so new and interesting to me, was illuminated by the dazzling beams of an unclouded sun; the sea, reflecting the azure sky, seemed of the colour of lapis-lazuli, which is peculiarly grateful to the sight, and forms a singular contrast with the yellow hue of an arid and sandy coast.

Alexandria, with its ruins, and grey, flat-roofed houses, resembles, at a distance, a town laid waste by the enemy. Every thing here recals the lapse of ages; and nature, as if to second the solemn impression which we feel at the recollection of so much past greatness, presents to the eye of the traveller only the sands of the desert. To the left of the city extends

the desert which leads to Rosetta; to the right, the great desert of Barca. With the exception of some solitary palms, which at a distance look like insulated pillars, no trace of vegetation is perceived on the coast. Such is the present state of this country, which has experienced so many revolutions—of this cradle of knowledge, so famous for its civilization, its arts, its philosophy, for the illustrious travellers who have visited it, and the conquerors by whom it has been invaded. While we were indulging in these reflections, a boat put out, and brought on board Mr. Drovetti, the French Consul-general, so well known in Europe for his refined taste, his indefatigable researches, his fortunate discoveries, and kind hospitality. It is to his exertions, and fifteen years labour, that we owe the interesting collection of Egyptian antiquities which has been purchased by the King of Sardinia. Dur-

ing our stay at Alexandria, he kindly offered us his okel,* which we accepted with much pleasure.

We landed the following day; and, as we crossed a part of the city to repair to the house of Mr. Drovetti, how many new objects attracted our attention! If we travel throughout Europe, we find, among the various nations which inhabit it, nearly the same external character impressed on them all. In the East, on the contrary, which has not made any progress with the lapse of time, we find much more originality in the features, the dress, manners, and customs of the inhabitants, who still bear the stamp of the high antiquity of their race, and their primitive civilization.

* A name given to the houses of the Consuls. Its etymology is derived from an Arabic word, synonymous with fort, or fortress: the greater part of these edifices, having been built in the time of war, have but one entrance, so that they can be kept constantly closed during a plague or revolt.

The East may be said to be at the same time older and younger than Europe: *older*, for the antiquity of its monuments, of which the poet says:

"La masse indestructible a fatigué le temps,"

and which will subsist for ages to come, protected by the nature of the climate, to attest the advanced civilization of those who erected them; *younger*, for the simplicity of the manners and customs of the present inhabitants, whose ignorance of luxury, limited desires, few wants, and inexpressible apathy, appear to indicate a people in their infancy.

It would be difficult to express the sensations which I experienced, when for the first time, I passed through the streets of Alexandria. It would require the talents of a Hogarth to paint all the various scenes of this magic lantern. What bustle, what confusion, is in these narrow streets, continually blocked up by an innu-

merable multitude of camels, mules, and asses; the cries of their drivers, incessantly calling to the passengers to take care of their naked feet; the vociferations and grimaces of the jugglers; the splendid costumes of the Turkish functionaries; the picturesque habit of the Bedouins, their long beards, and the grave and regular countenances of the Arabs; the nudity of some Santons, round whom the crowd throngs; the multitude of negro slaves; the howlings of the female mourners, accompanying a funeral procession, tearing their hair and beating their breasts, by the side of the noisy train of a marriage; the cries of the Muezims from the tops of the minarets, summoning the people to prayers; lastly, the afflicting picture of wretches dying with misery and want, and troops of savage dogs which pursue and harass you;—all this every moment arrests the progress and attracts the attention of the astonished traveller! As for myself, stunned by this extraordinary

noise, and overcome with fatigue, I at length reached, though not without incredible exertions, the okel of France, very happy at being able to take some hours' rest.

The Franks, at Alexandria, as in all the other towns in the East, occupy a quarter distinct from that of the Turks. The street of the Franks, which is the finest and largest in this city, is also much less noisy than the others. The houses, though built in the fashion of the Levant, have, notwithstanding, a European appearance which we do not meet with anywhere else in Egypt. The other streets, as I have already observed, are very narrow, and full of coffee-houses and bazars. The number of camels and asses which are used, as well for riding as for bringing provisions and water into the city, is very considerable. The uncultivated ground in the environs of Alexandria being nearly sterile, it is necessary to fetch every thing from a distance. The islands of the Archipe-

lago, Rosetta, and the fertile country of the Delta, supply the city with the necessaries of life, and the continual intercourse with Europe furnishes articles of luxury. The workmen in this country are extremely indolent, so that almost all kinds of household furniture must be had from Marseilles and Leghorn.

On the following day, mounted on the spirited courser of Sancho Pança, I rode through the street of the Franks, to visit the famous column improperly called Pompey's Pillar: it is situated a quarter of a league from the city, which formerly extended as far as Lake Mareotis. Nothing remains of its ancient splendour, but this column and the two obelisks of Cleopatra, one of which is thrown down, and which, on account of its enormous size, it has not been possible to send to London, notwithstanding all the exertions of the English. The four sides of these obelisks are covered with hieroglyphics in good preservation: one of the sides

of that which is still standing, and which is the most exposed to the north wind, is much more decayed than the other. Heaps of rubbish surround these obelisks, and cover the ground as far as the eye can reach: it is highly probable that they formerly adorned some public square, or were placed, perhaps, at the entrance of the palace of the Armida of the Romans. How is the scene changed!—a pile of stones, fallen columns, broken capitals, in the same spot which was formerly adorned with every thing that luxury, riches, and art, could bestow. Every thing bears the stamp of the hand of time, and the exhaustion of the soil,—the aridity is such that it does not allow even a few wild bushes to vegetate; the bustle which once prevailed in this part of the city, has now given place to silence and meditation. At a short distance we see the Greek convent; a grove of palm-trees rises above its walls, and the evening breeze alone breaks the general stillness. The present state of this cele-

brated country inspires a melancholy and painful feeling. A gloomy tinge seems to be spread over all objects; we even try to discover some connection, direct or indirect, between the solemn and grand style of the ancient Egyptian architecture, and the grave and regular physiognomy of the present inhabitants. As for the latter, they are seldom seen to smile; and the ebullitions of lively mirth are in their eyes, a want of decorum, and often even a proof of mental alienation.

On going the following day to the Rosetta gate, I saw ruins of more modern date—houses abandoned since the late revolutions in Egypt, and devastated at the taking of Alexandria by the French army. When Egypt became a province of the Roman empire, Alexandria was one of the best fortified cities of that time; and continued so till the decline of the empire. At the time of its conquest by the Saracens, this city having considerably fallen off from its

ancient magnificence, it had been found necessary to reduce its extent. A new line of ramparts was accordingly built, known by the name of Enclosure of the Arabs; and gates were erected, remarkable for the beauty of their architecture, but of which only a very few fragments now remain.

Since Egypt has become a part of the Ottoman Empire, the splendour and the strength of this city have gradually declined, as has been manifest in the later periods of its history, by the facility with which the enemy's troops have taken possession of the country. The present Government has begun to repair in some measure the ancient fortifications; but, to say the truth, little or nothing has been done, though means have been found to make it believed at Constantinople that these works have cost immense sums.

The canal of Mahmoudieh is one of the most useful enterprises of the present Pacha;

its object is to facilitate the commercial intercourse between Alexandria and Cairo. This canal has cost considerable sums; three hundred thousand men have been employed on it; and at the end of three months it was in the state in which we now see it; but it is probable that it will never be entirely finished. The work has been done in the Turkish fashion, that is to say, without the assistance of any skilful engineer: much labour and expense might have been spared, by carrying it on more nearly in a straight line, and by avoiding to dig too deep in some places, as they have done; from which the serious inconvenience has resulted, that subterraneous springs, mingling with the waters of the Nile, render that in the canal brackish, and consequently useless to the inhabitants of Alexandria. The first project of the Pacha, which suggested the idea of this canal, was very vast, and worthy of the enterprising genius of this extraordinary man: it

was proposed to give another course to the arm of the Nile which flows near Rosetta, and to bring it to Alexandria. In this manner the water of the Nile might have been directed so as to contribute to the defence of the city.

The European merchants established at Alexandria complain much, and with reason, of the present state of affairs: the commerce is entirely in the hands of the Pacha, who, perhaps, is not to be blamed for monopolizing this branch of industry, which brings immense sums into his private treasury.

Society at Alexandria offers but very few resources: yet some pleasure might be found in it, from the considerable number of European inhabitants, and the frequent arrival of travellers, if there were more harmony among the persons of whom it is composed; but so many different interests, joined to all the gossiping of a little country-town, do not render the abode in it very

attractive. As I resided in the house of Mr. Drovetti, I did not go much into general society, finding, in the conversation of the amiable and sensible persons who formed our little circle, all the pleasure that might be expected in the most select companies in our capitals.

Perhaps it will be agreeable to my readers, to make them acquainted with some of the most remarkable men who at present act a principal part in the affairs of Egypt. At the head of this historic gallery, I ought to place the portrait of the Pacha Mahomet Ali; but his rare talents and superior genius being sufficiently known and appreciated in Europe, I shall content myself with speaking of some individuals who in other respects merit public attention.

I will begin with the zealous founder of the celebrated collection of Antiquities at Turin. Mr. Drovetti has served with distinction in the French army: he was the friend and companion in arms of General Murat; but some mortifica-

tions which he experienced, made him desire to quit this brilliant theatre, and to renounce the profession of arms. He accordingly accepted, being still very young, the office of Consul-general of France in Egypt. His merit acquired him the respect of the different parties which succeeded each other, and gained him the esteem, friendship, and confidence, of Mahomet Ali, to so great a degree, that it would have depended only on himself to have obtained some distinguished post, either in the army or in the administration of the country; but he has constantly refused the offers made him by this prince, preferring, to the dangerous splendour of this favour, the advantage of serving his country, and the liberty of private life, which he has dedicated to study and to scientific researches.

Having resided in Egypt for these twenty-two years, none is better acquainted than he is with every thing relative to its monuments,

many of which have been discovered by himself: it is much to be desired, that he would communicate to the learned world the fruits of so many years study and observation; the sciences would be enriched by a multitude of new and accurate views, which would throw great light on the history of the arts which were first cultivated on the fortunate banks of the Nile. It is to his counsel that the country is indebted for several useful projects—among others, the introduction and manufacture of silk, from which great advantages may in future be derived, by obtaining some able workmen from Europe. After the events of 1815, which changed the Government of France, Mr. Drovetti had ceased to fill the post of French Consul; but he was reinstated in his office in 1821.

Mr. Salt, who has published Travels in Abyssinia, and whose skill as a draughtsman is well known, by the fine views in Lord Valentia's Travels, and those accompanying his

own works, has for a number of years filled the office of English Consul. He has had excavations made in various places, which have proved very successful; such as the opening of the pyramid of Cephrenes, and the clearing of the great Sphinx by Belzoni and Caviglia. He has a collection of antiquities, and has already sent many fine specimens to England. To form collections of antiquities is a pursuit which many persons in Egypt have taken up, in imitation of Mr. Drovetti.

Boghos Joussouff, Minister and Secretary of State, and first dragoman of Mahomet Ali, enjoys the highest favour with his master, and general esteem. He is descended from an ancient Armenian family of Smyrna, of the name of Abro. Most of the members of this family have at all times filled important offices, as well in their native city, as at Constantinople. Mr. Boghos commenced his diplomatic career at the age of twenty years, in the cha-

racter of dragoman of the Sublime Port, in the service of Joussouff Pacha, who commanded the army in Egypt. After the conquest of this country by the French, he returned with the Vizir to Constantinople, where he was recompensed for his services, by the office of dragoman to Ali Pacha, who had, in the meantime, been appointed Pacha of Egypt. He was succeeded by Kourschid Pacha, and the latter by Mahomet Ali. Since this period, Mr. Boghos has held the office of Secretary of State, and Minister of Commerce to the Pacha. He performs the duties of his high station with the greatest zeal and fidelity. He is said to be of a mild disposition, supple, and obliging; so that he seems to have been born for the post he occupies, in which much circumspection is required. He is allowed to possess an extensive knowledge of the branches of administration confided to his care, and speaks with fluency three European, and five Oriental languages.

As he receives a thirtieth on the exportation of merchandise, and enters into commercial speculations for his own account, he is said to possess a very considerable fortune, and to use it in a manner worthy of his character, by relieving the indigent of all nations, particularly Europeans. He is always complaisant towards strangers, and does every thing in his power to make their residence advantageous and agreeable. Though his situation appears to be brilliant, it is, however, not to be envied; for in fact it is only a splendid and continual slavery. Being obliged, by the custom of the East, to remain standing in the presence of his master, from five o'clock in the morning, till late at night, all business, all presentations, and all orders, pass through his hands; in fact, the meanest slave enjoys more liberty than this Minister. Notwithstanding this harassing life, he finds people to envy him, especially among the Turks, who are displeased at seeing

a Christian in the distinguished situation which he occupies. Such is the general fate of those whom fortune and favour load with their gifts.

Mr. Anastasi, a native of Greece, holds the situation of Swedish Consul, at Alexandria, and has a remarkable collection of antiquities, which is daily augmented by excavations and purchases. He is a man of exemplary probity; having some years since had the misfortune of being involved in a bankruptcy at Malta, from which he might have extricated himself with advantage, he preferred sacrificing every thing, in order to save his honour, and pay his debts. He came to Egypt to begin the world anew, and has so well succeeded by his perfect integrity, that he now enjoys an ample and solid fortune, and what is still better, general esteem.

Mr. Boghti, Consul General of Sweden, is a native of the Levant; but having been educated at Rome, he acquired in that city, not only useful knowledge, but a considerable

share of learning. He is perfect master of his native language, and possesses a choice collection of Arabic authors. It is in consequence of his advice, that the Viceroy has introduced several European institutions, manufactures, cotton spinning, &c. Being born in the Levant, he has many intimate connections with the natives, especially several of the most distinguished Sheiks and Ulemas, of Cairo. It was by his means that my husband was allowed to visit two of the principal mosques at Cairo, in the European dress.

CHAPTER II.

Fête given in honour of Alexander the Great of Russia, in the City of Alexander the Great of Macedon.

SPEAKING poetically, I will tell my readers that Phœbus, impatiently ascending his luminous car, had scarcely gilded the horizon with his earliest beams, when I was roused from the arms of Morpheus by a confused sound of drums and trumpets, mingled with piercing cries, and lowing of calves, accompanied at intervals by the firing of cannon. Not being able to account for these frightful discords, the noise of which continued to increase, like the roaring of the waves of the sea in a storm, I ran to my window, fearing at first that some

insurrection had broken out, and that they had come to besiege us in our European quarter; an event by no means surprising in the East, where people's minds are so fickle, and fanaticism so easily excited. What was my surprise, at beholding a band of a dozen Arab musicians sitting before the door of the Okel, and straining, with all their might, to execute this truly infernal music. The orchestra was composed of several clarionets, trumpets, tambourines, fifes, a large drum, and a kind of bagpipe. These virtuosos vied with each other, and gave me reason to admire the strength of their lungs. The street was crowded with individuals of all classes and ages, and the windows of the neighbouring houses were filled with people as curious as myself, to hear this concert. I looked round, however, for the poor animals, whose lamentable cries I had heard, when fresh lowings proceeding from the midst of the group, showed me, to my great asto-

nishment, an Arab, with a kind of large trumpet, from which he elicited the sounds which had struck my ear.

I was afterwards informed that this beautiful symphony was given in honour of the anniversary of the birth-day of the Emperor Alexander; and that the Russian Consul, who resided in the same Okel, had ordered this music. It lasted the greater part of the morning, and I being sufficiently satisfied with this specimen of Arabic talent, resolved in future to take good care to avoid all concerts of this description.

I was told on this occasion, that some European virtuosos having succeeded, after many difficulties, in getting up a concert at Alexandria, began, as usual, by performing an overture, when the Turks and Arabs who were present, impatiently asked when the concert would begin. They were told that the first piece had just been played; upon which they

shook their heads, saying, that they thought that the musicians were only tuning their instruments; that what they had just heard was no music at all, and that they should have done better not to throw away their money for nothing. It appears from this, that the Orientals entertain notions very different from ours on this subject. With them noise takes the place of harmony; and it may therefore be presumed, that some of our modern composers would be very successful among them.

CHAPTER III.

Departure from Alexandria.—Barbarous Custom.—The Princess of Abyssinia.—Egyptian Mariners.—Arrival at Cairo.

My husband had just set out, accompanied by several men of learning, on an excursion into the desert of Libya, with the view to seek the remains of the ancient Cyrene, and was to join me some months afterwards at Cairo. I left Alexandria a few days after his departure, and embarked on the canal of Mahmoudieh. The boats employed on it are large and convenient. The environs offer nothing agreeable, consisting only of sand hills, the aridity of which distresses and fatigues the eye. It was formerly necessary to pass through the

desert to go to Rosetta; thanks to the canal, the way is now much shorter, and less fatiguing. When I reached the end of the canal, I saluted, with a feeling of awe, the majestic Nile, whose fertilizing waters still inundated the country. A delightful sensation is inspired at the aspect of the verdant banks, the groups of sycamores, acacias, and palms, which rise above the water, particularly after having been so long deprived of the sight of verdure. The village of Fouah, once a considerable town, forms an agreeable object on the right bank of the Nile. Its houses, partially hid by groves of palms, some tombs of saints, erected at a short distance from the village, the elegant forms of the minarets of the mosque, gilded by the last rays of the setting sun, would be a delightful subject for an able artist:—yet even the pencil of Claude could not have expressed the violet magic tint, which, spreading over all objects after the setting of the sun, blended in a transparent mist

the distant horizon with the atmosphere. The water of the Nile is reddish and troubled; during the time of the inundation it contains a great deal of slime, nitre, and clay, which, mixed with its water, and spread over the country, contribute to fertilize the land. The water, when purified, is very agreeable to the taste: the inhabitants ascribe many virtues to it. The attachment and religious veneration which they entertain for this river, which is justly called the benefactor of Egypt, descend to them from the ancient Egyptians, their ancestors, by a tradition of uninterrupted gratitude. Popular festivals are annually celebrated at Cairo, at the time of the rising of the waters. The people run to the banks, and amidst the firing of cannon, open the dikes to let the water into the canals. Cries of joy, music, dancing, games, which the antics and superstition of the spectators render very comic, animate this scene. There formerly existed a barbarous

custom: they drowned on this day a virgin, for whom they intended the honour of being espoused to the Nile. This inhuman ceremony has been abolished, but the Nile still requiring a bride, they make a figure of clay, which is thrown into the water amidst the acclamations of the multitude.

Our travelling companions were Mr. Rosetti, the Prussian Consul, and his lady, who, as hospitable as the Orientals themselves, had the kindness to offer me their house during my stay at Cairo. Besides our domestics, there were on board some young negresses and an Abyssinian girl, a relation to the king of Abyssinia, who, with a recommendation from the English Consul, desired to return home. This young person had accompanied to Alexandria, the daughter of the king of Abyssinia, her relative, who had married a servant of Lord Valentia, at the time of his lordship's travels in that country. This Englishman, after several years stay in

Abyssinia, had gone with his wife to Alexandria, where they had both lately died, leaving the young girl, the heiress of their fortune, under the protection of the English Consul. Being a Christian, she was distinguished from her companions by a little silver cross, which was suspended from her neck. Notwithstanding her high birth, she did not disdain to sleep in the open air, lying on the deck of the vessel, on the sacks of corn which composed the cargo. Her complexion, though of a disagreeable yellow, was much clearer than that of the Arab women. Though Abyssinia is much nearer to the line, its lofty mountains render the climate far more temperate than that of Egypt.

It appears that the Abyssinians, who had already adopted the Jewish religion, embraced Christianity during the first centuries of our era, when it was spread in Egypt, and it has ever since been preserved in Abyssinia. When the victorious Arabs and Saracens subdued

this country, burning and destroying the Christian churches, the Abyssinians, proud of the nature of their country, into which it is difficult to penetrate, refused to pay tribute to these nomade people and preserved the religion of their fathers. Christianity, however, has not softened the natural ferocity of their character, and exists among them only in name. They have retained many of the Jewish ceremonies; yet with all this they pique themselves upon a kind of orthodoxy, which induces them obstinately to refuse listening to the Roman Catholic missionaries, several of whom have fallen victims among them to their apostolic zeal. We were told that some, who had attempted to enter their country, for the purpose of spreading their doctrines, have been crucified. It is probable that they do not ill-treat the protestant missionaries, sent out by the London Bible Society; their mode of worship is said to approach more nearly to the simplicity of the first ages of the

church. Not having been able to make myself personally acquainted with this people, I can only relate what I have heard without vouching for its correctness.

The banks of the Nile, as you sail farther, present but little variety; villages, mosques, tombs of saints, all built nearly in the same manner: and this paradise of Egypt, so much extolled by travellers, seemed to me only a dreary uniformity. If any thing surprised me, it was the strength and agility of our sailors; going against the current, which in many places is extremely rapid, I saw about twenty of these men throw themselves into the water, to tow the maache;* and on reaching the shore, continue this laborious toil for half a day together, exposed to a burning sun, and obliged, by the inequalities of the land and the water, to swim and run by turns. Their strength appeared to me more than human, and I believe that we

* A name given to the great boats on the Nile.

find nowhere such indefatigable sailors as in Egypt. They are besides, one of the best classes of the people; of which I have witnessed a very pleasing example: one of our men threw himself into the water and swam with a small bundle on his head, towards the bank, which was at a great distance: I enquired the reason of it, and was informed that he was going to a village, above a league off, to carry to the wife of one of his companions, who was too old to undertake so fatiguing a journey himself, some money which he had earned during his absence. I saw him reach the shore, run with the rapidity of an arrow, and stop at the entrance of the village to put on his dress. As our boat sailed very fast, I saw him an hour after re-appear in the water, and continue with the same cheerfulness the fatiguing work which awaited his return. The lively disposition of this class, seems to be owing to the scantiness of their

wants and their extreme temperance; they subsist almost entirely on lentils; and it is curious that Strabo, speaking of lentils, pretends that this kind of food greatly tends to render people lively. Without, however, giving all the honour to the lentils, it is nevertheless certain that so simple a diet, and the active life of these men, must have an influence on their mind and constitution. Our European sailors, who are poorer than the peasantry, are among us too, more gay and unconcerned than the other working classes of society.*

The seventh day after my departure from Alexandria, I at length perceived in the distance the famous pyramids of Gizeh, and soon after we landed at Boulak, the great suburb of Cairo.

* I am aware that it may be objected, and with reason, that the gaiety and carelessness of European sailors are owing rather to their unsettled mode of life than to their diet. However, one of these causes does not exclude the other.

CHAPTER IV.

Stay at Cairo.—The Interior of most of the Houses in that City.—The Asses of Africa.—Benevolence of the Arabs.—Great Caravan of Mecca.

HAVING acquainted my readers with Alexandria, I shall, in speaking of Cairo, content myself with saying, that this city, on account of its great population, and as the common centre or capital of Egypt, is no less animated than the first of these places. The streets are perhaps still narrower than those of Geneva and Naples, where the houses are frequently so near together, that it is easy to shake hands with your opposite neighbour. In a climate so sultry as that of Egypt, these streets have the advantage of being cool and shady during

part of the day. Cairo presents much more originality than Alexandria, which, being a sea-port and a commercial city, has a constant intercourse with Europe. This latter city has at all times been considered as out of the limits of Egypt; originally it was entirely inhabited by foreigners, and it was not till under the government of the later Ptolemies, that the Egyptians likewise obtained permission to reside in it. The great number of strangers whom we meet there, even in these times, may make us forget for a moment our distance from Europe; whereas at Cairo, it is very rare to meet with the European costume. The number of coffee-houses, public baths, and bazars, is immense; the crowd which fills the latter, at all hours of the day, would not permit a woman to pass through them on foot, unless she would run the risk of losing a limb. Several times, in attempting to pass through these bazars, I was stopped with my mule, not-

withstanding the exertions of my two Arab attendants, who kept close to me, and protected me with their persons, crying out with all their might, and distributing blows on all sides.

The house of Mr. Charles Rosetti, in which I resided, is situated in the quarter of the Franks; it is spacious, commodious, and agreeable, and contains several courts. It is a mixture of Arab and European architecture, uniting the advantages of both. The inside of most of the courts in Cairo, is adorned with a peristyle of columns, the elegance of which strikes at the first sight. The apartments are almost all spacious and lofty, frequently adorned with very fine carvings in wood, and gothic windows, the coloured glass of which sheds an agreeable and magic light, which reminded me of our gothic chapels in Germany and England.* I was never in one of these apartments

* The object of this work not admitting of a dissertation upon architecture, I shall merely observe here,

without feeling that religious awe, which had been impressed upon my heart from my childhood, at the sight of one of those ancient monuments erected by the piety of our ancestors, or without fancying myself transported to Byzantium, during the latter centuries of the Lower Empire.

It is truly singular that one cannot take a step in Egypt, in the present times, without constantly recurring to past ages; but, indeed, every thing that we see is so contrary to the usual course of our ideas, that we are sometimes tempted to confound reality with the illusions of imagination. In Mr. Rosetti's drawing-room there was a good piano of Vienna manufacture, and it may be imagined what pleasure I received at the sight of this instru-

that I know the difference between the Gothic, Byzantine, and Arabic, architecture, but these three styles may be easily confounded at first sight by persons not accustomed to them.

ment, in which I was to find a frequent source of recreation.

During the absence of my husband, I regularly made excursions in the afternoon, accompanied by my host, by a janissary, who preceded us on horseback, and by some Arabs, running at my side and directing my mule. Thus I traversed Cairo and its environs, in all directions. Sometimes we extended our excursions for several hours; and, on these occasions, I admired the indefatigable activity of my Arabs, who, to follow our mules, were obliged to run at full speed, over burning sands and uneven roads, for many hours together. I truly pitied them; but their good-will, their patience, their gentle disposition, were proof against every thing. Habit alone can enable these poor people to endure such fatigues. They are accustomed to them betimes; for the thousands of asses which are hired at Cairo, to go from one

part of the city to the other, are always accompanied by a guide, who frequently is little more than a child. The African asses do not possess any of the bad qualities imputed to ours. They are every thing rather than indolent; and it is, on the contrary, very difficult to moderate their spirit. They generally go at a short trot, and their pace is perfectly even and gentle: they are so patient of fatigue that on my husband, one day, visiting the pyramids of Saccarah, nearly five leagues from Cairo, returned at an early hour the same day, without having had occasion to give the ass any food during the journey. They have very singular saddles: those of the women are so high, that they sit on them as on a throne, with their feet on the neck of the animal.

I never could accustom myself to these saddles, and, in riding, always used an English one. In this manner, and dressed in

the French fashion, I rode to the most remote quarters of the city, without ever meeting with any thing disagreeable. I confess, however, that my heart sometimes misgave me, when I passed through the bazars, or before the mosques, and the quarters of the Turkish soldiers. Naturally attracting the attention of the passengers, by my dress and mode of riding, I could not help recollecting the tragic end of one of the daughters of the Swedish consul, who had been killed by an Albanian soldier, some years before, in one of the squares of Cairo. If it was imprudent to expose myself in this manner, the pleasure which these excursions afforded me overcame my natural timidity, and it was by these means that I was able to observe and study the character of the Arabs. Good-faith and charity are two qualities which I had often occasion to admire in them. I often saw the owner of a shop leave it, and content himself with

tying a cord before it; or merely covering with a cloth his baskets of fruit or bread, which not one of the crowd that passed by attempted to touch. As to their charity, it is such that it extends even to the brute creation. I have seen Arabs, poor themselves, feed troops of hungry dogs; and yet, with the religious superstition which characterizes them, dread touching one of these animals.

Dogs, which, according to the Mahometan law, are unclean or impure, are not used in Egypt as domestic animals. They are seen in great numbers in the environs and streets of Cairo; they are often very mischievous, and obstinately pursue passengers; but there is not a single instance of a mad dog, which is very extraordinary, considering the excessive heat and the privation of water to which they are exposed: from which it might be inferred that their madness must be ascribed to their being domesticated. It is curious to see the

dogs of Cairo divide the city among them into quarters, like officers of police, and not permit any dog belonging to another quarter to pass the boundary. Such a violation of the established rules generally produces a bloody war, and I have seen these animals, in spite of the laws of hospitality, cruelly bite an unhappy deserter who had dared to transgress his limits. As for the beggars of the city, who are very numerous, they rarely pass a shop containing provisions, without receiving from the owner some food, which at least supports life. The misery of these unhappy beings, is so shocking, that one must be accustomed to it, not to experience, every moment, the pain which a sensible mind feels at the sight of the sufferings of our fellow creatures. What treasures would be required to succour so many wretches in a country where the public institutions for the relief of the unfortunate are so very imperfect! The bounty of individuals is insufficient in such

cases, and it is then we have reason to praise the wisdom of a government, which, by distributing its benefits with discernment, arrests the progress of an evil which frequently arises from vice, idleness, and obstinacy.*

Riding one day through the streets of Cairo, I met the great caravan returning from Mecca. The street was so thronged by it, that I was obliged to wait till it had passed. It is a very curious sight, which is seen only once a year. This caravan, composed of pilgrims to Mecca, sets out from Barbary and stops at Cairo, where it encamps, then continues its journey, becoming larger as it advances, like the avalanches on the mountains of Switzerland.

* There are at Cairo many funds, bequeathed by private persons, for charitable purposes. But as these funds are for the most part attached to the mosques, and managed by the priests, it frequently happens that the latter appropriate the revenues to themselves, without ever thinking of fulfilling the intentions of the donors. Many sheiks at Cairo have acquired immense wealth in this manner.

The faithful who have made a vow to go and pray at the tomb of the Prophet, collect from all quarters, and place themselves under the protection of the sheik of the caravan; a privilege enjoyed exclusively by a tribe of Arabs under the command of their chief. The valuable presents which this caravan generally carries to Mecca, render this measure necessary, and notwithstanding the armed force by which it is escorted, it frequently happens that it is attacked by the Bedouin tribes who roam in the deserts of Lybia and Arabia, and live only by rapine and plunder. The law of Mahomet commands every true believer, to perform, at least once in his life, the pilgrimage to Mecca, so that the number of persons from the confines of Asia and Africa, who undertake this dangerous and fatiguing journey, is always considerable. The caliphs of Cairo formerly enjoyed the prerogative of presenting, annually, a magnificent carpet at the tomb of the Prophet; but

now the Pacha of Egypt, as the successor to their rights, has the honour of offering this rich present. At the end of the year this carpet is cut into small pieces, which are distributed among the faithful, by whom they are highly prized.

In the caravan which passed before me, I saw several women, who, by their style of travelling, appeared to me to be of high rank. A large camel sometimes carried two, in a kind of sedan chair, fastened on each side of the animal. Other females, seated in palanquins, borne by two mules, were accompanied by their slaves, and surrounded with every thing that luxury and wealth could supply; lastly, those of the poorer class, with infants at the breast, were merely sitting on camels or asses, and in this manner submitted to all the hardships of this long journey. Men mounted on superb horses, with haughty looks, in splendid and singular dresses, and remark-

able for the beauty of their arms:—in short, a strange medley of pilgrims of all ages, sexes, and colours, attracted and engrossed my attention. I thanked my good fortune for having so well served me on this occasion, as on my return I was told that I had run great danger in thus exposing myself to the sight of those fanatics.

CHAPTER V.

Visit to the Palace of Schoubra.

THE use of carriages is not known in Egypt; all journeys are performed either by water or caravans; in the latter case camels are chiefly used; however, the horses of the Bedouins are very well calculated for the immense deserts, their temperance being nearly equal to that of the camel. A carriage in Egypt is therefore a real phenomenon; it would even be of no use so long as there are no beaten roads. The only one at Cairo belongs to the Pacha, who had it brought from Marseilles, out of curiosity. He cannot

use it, except to go from Cairo to his country palace at Schoubra, to which he has made an excellent road, on which he sometimes gives his women the amusement of a drive in the carriage. As this does not occur very often, it is always a sight at Cairo, which attracts numerous spectators.

Mr. Rosetti, thinking to gratify me, took the liberty of requesting the Pacha to lend him the carriage, and now behold me, accompanied by his lady and her mother-in-law, both natives of the Levant, in a pretty berline, drawn by six horses, driven furiously by an Arab coachman, on the road to Schoubra. To get out of the gates of the city was by no means an easy matter; the narrow streets, a crowd of people whom the sight had attracted round us, the cries of the populace, the swearing of the coachman, and the fear of running over somebody, which, however, did not hinder us from going at full gallop, inspired me with an alarm which it

is difficult to describe; while my companions, to whom this pleasure was quite new, laughed aloud, and seemed to have no notion of the danger of their situation. We, however, arrived at Schoubra without any accident. It is a pretty palace in the Constantinopolitan style, and appeared to me to be very slightly built. The rooms are very high, and loaded with a profusion of gilding and mirrors. The carvings in wood, of the ceilings, are really very fine, gilt, and painted in lively colours. The floors of the saloons were covered with magnificent carpets; and, if the whole does not display much taste, the splendour and diversity of the ornaments of these apartments has an agreeable effect to the eye.

The Orientals have no taste for the fine arts: we should look in vain for the masterpieces in painting and sculpture which embellish ours. They expend immense sums in gilding and mirrors, but would not give a piastre for a Ma-

donna of Raphael, or an Hebe of Canova. The Mahometan religion is not favourable to the fine arts; it even prohibits, as a crime, the imitation of the human figure, either in painting or in sculpture. We need not, therefore, be surprised, that Greece, the cradle of the arts, has not produced any masterpiece since it has become the conquest of these barbarians.

The gardens of Schoubra are pretty extensive, and planted with taste; but much crowded with summer-houses. Most of the walks are paved with small coloured stones, which form a kind of mosaic that has a pleasing effect. Attempts have been made to naturalize many plants and fruit-trees from Europe, in order to encourage this branch of industry which might in time be productive of great advantages. After having visited every part of the gardens, and looked at the immense plantations of mulberry-trees, which border both sides of the road, we thought of returning, and letting the

ladies get into the carriage. I preferred going back to Cairo, in a less splendid but safer manner, galloping by the side of their triumphal car.

CHAPTER VI.

The Citadel of Cairo—Joseph's Well—Consternation occasioned by a Bear.

BEING desirous to see the citadel, rendered so famous by the massacre of the Mamelukes,* I obtained permission to visit it, and

* This corps of troops, which had so long governed Egypt, having given offence to Mahomet Ali, he invited them into the citadel, under pretence of a feast, which was to be concluded by a solemn march through the streets of Cairo. At the moment when the procession was about to descend, these unfortunate men, who had been blinded by their confidence, were attacked and massacred by Albanian troops, advantageously posted on the rocks which command the road. This act of barbarity, which policy required, at length restored tranquillity to Egypt, by permanently consolidating the power of Mahomet Ali. This scene of horror has lately been ably represented by the pencil of Mr. Horace Vernet.

went there with a large party. This citadel, which commands Cairo, is itself overlooked by the Mokatam,* and would, for this reason, be ill calculated to defend the city. The Pacha has rebuilt the palace which had been burnt, and surrounded it with pretty terraces, which are adorned with orange-trees and flowers. The prospect commanded from the windows of this palace is truly magnificent. At our feet lay the immense city of Cairo, from this elevation resembling a great ant-hill: in the distance the view embraced a rich plain, watered by the Nile, which had lately returned within its natural limits, and was covered with the first verdure of spring, which is so brilliant in this happy climate. To the West, our eyes discovered those venerable witnesses of past ages, lifting their grey summits to the clouds, and seeming proud of their struggle against time; and

* A chain of lime-stone mountains.

the desert of sand, which separates the pyramids from the cultivated grounds, appears, when viewed from this elevation, to serve as a line of demarcation between life and death; between the present and the past: lastly, the remote horizon was bounded by two chains of arid mountains, which enclosed this striking picture.

On leaving the palace, we went to visit the granary and the well of Joseph. The first of these is remarkable for the beautiful marble columns which support its roof, and which are supposed to have been taken from a temple at Memphis. They have not preserved the character of the Egyptian architecture, and it seems evident that the Arab chisel has made some changes in it. Joseph's well is said to be two hundred and seventy-six feet deep, and it is divided into two stages: a narrow and steep path, cut into the rock, leads to the bottom. An enclo-

sure above the first terrace, is taken by the inhabitants for the tomb of the patriarch Joseph. Notwithstanding its depth, there is nothing remarkable in this well; for there are others of the same kind in Europe, for instance, that of the fortress of Königstein, in Saxony. When we descended from the citadel, we saw, in one of the courts of the chateau, an enormous elephant, which had been brought hither by the caravan from India: but it was decreed that we should not leave this place of terror without feeling its effects ourselves; for a bear, confined in the same place, escaping from its chains, frightened our mules, which set off at full speed, pursued by the formidable animal. It was, at length, fortunately secured, and we escaped with the fright.

CHAPTER VII.

Gazelles — Popular Romances — Amusements of the Arabs — Wit of a Buffoon — The Use of Opium.

During my stay at Cairo, I had the mortification to lose a young gazelle, which I had brought from Alexandria. This charming little creature was so attached to me, that it never quitted my room, and followed me every where about like a dog. The gazelles are certainly the most delicate and elegant animals in the world. Their legs are exceedingly slender, and their agility surpasses all imagination. When they leap they spread their four legs in the air, so that they look like a bird flying. They are extremely clean,

and have a strong smell of musk. Their hair is short, smooth, and shining, and of a grey colour, inclining to brown. Their eyes are magnificent; the Orientals continually allude to them, to compliment their mistresses; and I have heard boatmen sing popular airs, the burden of which was always the eyes of the gazelle.

This song of the boatmen, though monotonous, has something agreeable and soothing; they sing in chorus, and from time to time a voice declaims in recitative, to which the others answer: these are a kind of ballads, or amatory songs, in which figures are not spared. The Arabs have a very poetical imagination, as their literature proves; and, but for the tyrannic yoke which now fetters them, we might see the age of the Abbasides revived. Their language is very copious: to express the idea of a Supreme Being, they have ninety-nine different terms; they say that the hun-

dredth name which their language wants, is too sublime to be pronounced by the lips of a mortal. This idea appears to me very grand, and worthy of the Divinity.

One of the chief amusements of the Arabs consists in listening to histories, or tales in the style of the Arabian Nights; they are never tired of hearing the most absurd and marvellous stories; to which they give a degree of credence and attention that are truly laughable. I have often seen groups of women, with their pipes in their mouths, sitting round an old sibyl, who narrated some fable, which made their hair stand on end. They followed with their eyes all the motions of the sorceress, with an expression of terror and astonishment, and did not breathe freely till the conclusion had answered their expectation.

The men, who have more variety in their amusements, are, however, as delighted as the women with this kind of entertainment. They

are particularly fond of assembling in the coffee-houses, where they pass whole days in smoking their long pipes, called chibon, or the *nargile*, a kind of long tube made of leather, ending in a vase full of cold water. They are likewise very partial to plays and slight of hand, as well as the singing and dancing of the women of the privileged class. Men in office, and the rich, have another kind of amusement, which was in great vogue in Europe during the middle ages; namely, that of buffoons or professed fools. These Oriental buffoons maintain the reputation for wit acquired by their European brethren. They often tell their masters very plain truths; lay wagers with them, and do not spare ingenious tricks, and even knavery, to attain their object, which, as may well be supposed, is no other than to obtain money. I was told the following trait of ingenuity in one of these buffoons. This man one day seeing his master eat pillau, a favourite dish among the Turks, which

he would not have dared to touch before the end of the repast, amused himself meantime with holding over the dish pieces of bread, which he swallowed after they were imbued with the steam of the rice, to show how desirous he was to have what was left. When the Turk had finished eating, he said to him, in an angry tone, "You have been robbing me of the steam of my dish: you shall pay me for it; this pillau was worth a piaster, you shall pay me four." "Nothing is more just," answered the buffoon; "I will pay you immediately for what I have taken from you." He then drew from his purse a Spanish dollar, which he balanced on the top of his finger, and made it ring in the ear of his master. The latter not knowing what this meant, at length asked impatiently when he was to be paid? "Are you not paid already?" said the buffoon; surely the sound of this metal is as good as the smell of your rice."

Notwithstanding the prohibition of the Koran,

the men are in general given to drinking; they always find means to procure wine, and take it either in secret, or under the pretext of health, as a medicine. The use of opium, so prejudicial to health, is common among them. That of Thata, in the Thebais, was formerly considered the best, but a great deal is now obtained from India. The common people, instead of opium, prepare another narcotic, extracted from hemp leaves, pulverized, which they mix with honey and some aromatic substances; these they form into little pills, which are easily swallowed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Serpents—Magicians—Psylli—Religious Enthusiasm.

I WAS one day taken to see tricks performed with serpents and scorpions. When I arrived, I saw an Arab crouched on the ground, who handled two enormous serpents with great dexterity: he made them glide, sometimes into his bosom, sometimes under his turban, and produced them, the next moment, in a box, from which he seemed to take them. He then suspended them round his neck, taking their head in his mouth; then coiling them round his arms, he commanded them to remain quiet there, while he recommenced the same manœuvre with two horrible scorpions,

the stings of which he had taken out, as he had done the fangs of the serpents. He then made these hideous reptiles fight together, which seemed enraged with each other. This battle being terminated, he threw a number of little balls into the air, which he caught with much agility, in the same manner as the Indian jugglers whom we see in Europe. These tricks, however, began to tire me, and I went away before the conclusion.

Some days after, I was informed of the arrival of a kind of magician, belonging to the caste of the Psylli, who pretend that they possess the secret of attracting towards them all serpents which may by chance be concealed in a house. The appearance of this man had something repulsive, and perfectly agreeing with the frightful part he had chosen. His bristled hair formed a kind of tuft on the top of his head; all the rest was shaved; a black and shining beard fell down upon

his breast, over which hung two rows of black beads, crossing each other; he held in one hand a white rod, made of the branch of a date-tree, and he had thrown aside his dress to show that he had no serpents concealed in his jacket. He commenced, by muttering some mystic words: then running all over the house, he struck the walls with his magic wand;* rolling his eyes, and making frightful contortions: but, as no serpents made their appearance, he ordered chafing-dishes to be brought, and commenced fumigations with flour, sulphur, and onion-peel, which spread such a smoke and offensive smell, that it almost suffocated us; while he himself, losing his breath, was several times obliged to interrupt his conjurations. This

* This wand is generally taken from the summit of the tree, the young leaves of which, like the heart of a lettuce, have a delicate flavour resembling walnuts. Serpents are said to be very fond of them; perhaps the smell of this branch may contribute to attract them.

scene took place in one of the cellars of the house, filled with charcoal and a number of barrels. The serpents continuing to resist his exorcisms, he began to be evidently embarrassed and uneasy; for he would have been very sorry to lose his reputation as a sorcerer, which gave him great celebrity among his countrymen. We observed that he, from time to time, approached his comrade, who had followed him hither, without doubt in the hope that, favoured by the smoke and the obscurity of the place, the latter would be able to slip into his hand a serpent, which he had probably concealed in his girdle; but we took care not to lose sight of him: and when my husband told him that he would closely examine the serpent which he produced, to convince himself whether it had still all its teeth, he despaired of fascinating our eyes: he told us that the serpent had quitted the cellar, and taken refuge in the centre of

the earth. It was by this excuse that he thought to save his reputation, as a man of extraordinary talent. It may, however, be allowed, to a certain extent, that these people possess the secret of attracting serpents; but it is very natural, where there are none, they cannot make any appear by the power of their art.

These people, called Psylli, and who still form a separate class, are supposed to be descended from the ancient Psylli, mentioned by Pliny, Celsus, and other writers of antiquity. They now employ themselves, as formerly, in taking and taming serpents. They firmly believe they possess a secret which renders these animals subject to their power. It appears, from a passage in the Psalms, that the ancient Psylli likewise practised these tricks. In Ecclesiasticus, xii. 13. it is said, "Who will pity a charmer that is bitten with a serpent?" This passage

proves the antiquity of their profession, and their mysterious science. We were told, that there are now three hundred of them at Cairo. They have initiated disciples, and young people are not admitted to a knowledge of the secrets of their art, till they have given proofs of discretion and address. Some days before the Caravan of Mecca leaves Cairo, and also on the birth-day of the Prophet, these Psylli go in procession through the streets of the city, as well as those of Rosetta, which enjoys the same prerogative, having large serpents suspended round their necks, and reciting prayers and religious hymns. They exert themselves to such a degree during this pious exercise, that they fall, or at least pretend to fall, into paroxysms of fanatic rage. They bite the serpents, and rend them with their teeth, uttering frightful cries and howlings, accompanied with convulsive motions, till, exhausted with fatigue and foaming at the mouth, they fall down half dead. The people, who consider

them as saints, then surround them, and the women, especially, eagerly collect the foam, which they firmly believe will procure them immediate admittance to Paradise.

I had occasion to witness at Cairo another species of religious fanaticism. I heard one day, at a short distance from my residence, for several hours together, singing, or more properly crying, so uniform and fatiguing that I inquired the cause of this singularity. I was told that it was some dervise or monk, who repeated, while dancing on his heels, the name of Allah, till, completely exhausted, he sunk down insensible. These unhappy visionaries in fact often expire at the end of this holy dance; and the cries of the one whom I heard, having commenced in the afternoon, and continued during the whole of the night, and part of the following morning, I doubt not that his pious enthusiasm cost him his life.

CHAPTER IX.

Superstitions.—Baths.—Early marriages.—Despair of a mother.

THE Arabs, like all the Orientals, are extremely superstitious: the art of looking into futurity is still very commonly professed among them. They draw most of their auguries from the lines of the palm of the hand; sometimes they also use little black and white balls, which they throw like dice upon large sheets of parchment covered with cabalistic figures. I sent for one of the old sibyls, who practised this art, and I put her into a passion by plaguing her in my turn.

The Baths, which in the East are a public

amusement of the women, are too well known to be dwelt upon here. These baths, which are generally situated in the bazars, are open during several days in the week to the public in general: women of all ages, in their finest clothes, assemble early in the morning and pass here the greater part of the day; it is a place of rendezvous, where they generally carry even their young children. The extreme heat of these vapour baths often obliges them, however, to lay aside not only their ornaments, but even their dress, and thus they spend the day, chatting, smoking, and laughing: for the women of the East never amuse themselves so much as at these places of public meeting. Meantime, their slaves rub their limbs with a kind of paste, made of the filaments of the date-tree, which is said especially to contribute to render the skin soft and smooth, which they consider as a principal charm, or else they anoint them with precious perfumes, and make their joints

crack to render them supple. A lady of my acquaintance who visited these baths, told me that it was a very singular and curious scene, but that the eye was much oftener struck by features of ugliness, than by the pleasing forms of beauty. Not having felt any inclination to visit these baths, I contented myself with seeing those in the house of Mr. Rosetti, the neatness and elegance of which are far preferable to those of the bazars, where hundreds of women assemble. The ladies of the family, among whom was a grand-mother, twenty-seven years of age, used them frequently.

It is generally believed, that the frequent use of vapour baths tends early to destroy the charms of the Oriental women; however, the climate of Egypt, and the early marriages, have also a share. Young persons are married when they are little better than children, and the Cophts often marry their children at the age of six, or seven years. You see mothers, twelve

or thirteen years of age, and the women of Egypt might frequently see themselves surrounded with their great grand-children, if nature granted them as long a life as the women of other countries: but they rarely attain an advanced age, and it seems that their precocious developement contributes more speedily to destroy their physical strength, by exhausting the principle of vitality.

I was one day witness at Cairo to a truly distressing scene: a poor Arab widow, who lived opposite to me, had the misfortune to lose her only daughter. The violent grief to which the unhappy mother gave herself up, cannot be described; the streets of Cairo being, as I have already said, extremely narrow, I was able to see every thing that passed in her house: when the young person had expired, the distressed mother began to tear her hair, to rend her garments, and beat her breast, uttering such piercing cries that I thought she was going to lose her reason.

The female mourners having arrived, she covered her face with dirt; her cries, tears, and lamentations did not cease till the deceased was buried. I cannot comprehend how their strength can bear such violent emotions; but I was told that these outward tokens of despair are employed in Egypt, on the death of every individual, whether sincerely regretted or not. Herodotus, in Book II. chap. LXXXV., has recorded the ceremonies anciently in use at the death of an Egyptian, and it is a faithful picture of what is still daily practised on similar occasions in this country.

CHAPTER X.

Visit to the Pyramids.

NONE of the numerous travellers who visit in our days the ancient kingdom of the Pharaohs, will fail to admire the gigantic and durable monuments of these shepherd kings. The most singular circumstance is, that time, which preserves traditions more easily than works raised by the hand of man, has not transmitted any precise information respecting the primitive object of these astonishing edifices. Herodotus himself, who saw them above twenty centuries before us, contents himself with giving some vague data, which are rather suppositions than

historical facts. The majority of ancient authors are not agreed either on the time or object of their erection: Aristotle, speaking of the pyramids, pretends that they were erected by tyrants, in order to employ the people and prevent them from revolting. The supposition which is most generally credited, and is founded on the well-known taste of the ancient Egyptians for magnificent sepulchres, is that which considers the pyramids as the mausoleums or tombs of their founders. It is, however, probable that these singular edifices likewise served for the initiations, and perhaps for the religious ceremonies, of these shepherds who invaded Egypt, and were attached to the Sabæan worship. It is well known that the dynasty of the shepherd kings maintained itself in Egypt during several centuries, and that they chose Memphis for their capital, whereas the ancient Sacerdotal government was established at Thebes.

Being desirous to behold with our own eyes

the colossal grandeur of these edifices, of which a just idea cannot be formed except by being placed at their foot, we fixed a day for the excursion, with a numerous company, and all the ladies of Mr. Rosetti's family. As these ladies had to pass through a great part of the city and feared the fatigue of their large black silk cloaks, which cover half the face, they chose the Mameluke costume, and, without well knowing why, I followed their example. Camels, carrying tents and provisions, had been sent before us early in the morning. Our little caravan, consisting of eight gentlemen in the European dress, five ladies in the Turkish costume, followed by some janissaries, negro slaves, and the Arab guides running by our side, set out, mounted on asses, in the finest weather.

Having never before worn the Mameluke dress, I found myself extremely embarrassed in passing through the streets of Cairo, as I observed that we excited the attention and curio-

sity of the crowd, who doubtless were surprised to see five Turks among this European company. My companions, to whom I did not dare to speak, participated in my embarrassment, and we felt quite relieved when we reached the country. We then passed through old Cairo, a kind of suburb, distant about half a league from the city, and cast a look at the beautiful aqueduct, which is of the time of the Caliphs, and has a picturesque effect.

We embarked at this place to cross the Nile, and admired on the passage the charming isle of Rhoda, formed by two arms of this river, and adorned with the richest vegetation; then passing through a grove of palms which grows on the ruins of ancient Memphis, our road led through fields and pastures, intersected by numerous ditches and canals for watering the land, till nature, becoming more and more sterile and destitute of all vegetation, we came

to the entrance of a sandy desert which we had to cross to reach the Pyramids.

The sheik of the Pyramids, accompanied by several Arabs of the tribe inhabiting the desert round them, and who claim the right of guiding strangers to them, came to meet us, and received us, as it were, on the frontiers of his dominions. It was formerly very dangerous to make even a short excursion in the environs of Cairo, on account of the tribes of wandering Arabs, who made no scruple of plundering and massacreing travellers. Lord Valentia, who was here fifteen years before us, had found it necessary to have an escort of a hundred soldiers, whereas, under the government of Mahomet Ali, we enjoyed this pleasure in perfect security.

When we first saw these monuments at a distance, they did not appear to us of colossal size, and it was not till we were quite near them,

that we were able to judge of the immensity of their dimensions, by the objects of comparison round them. A silent wonder, or rather dread, seizes the soul at the sight of this gigantic pile of stones, which seems as if placed by enchantment in the middle of the Desert. When we reflect how many thousand hands laboured to erect these edifices, and how much knowledge the ancients must have possessed in the employment of mechanical means, not only to convey these enormous blocks of stone, but also to raise them to such a height, we are struck with astonishment at the sight of such an undertaking, and make painful reflections on the inutility of most of the works of man.

I entered the largest of the Pyramids, that of Cheops. The other ladies did not wish to follow me, as the vaulted and winding passage, which leads to the interior of the building, is very fatiguing: in some places you are obliged to creep through a very narrow opening; in

others the steps are so steep, that I never could have mounted them without the assistance of my two Arabs. Notwithstanding my disguise, these good people had doubtless guessed who I was, as they paid great attention to me, encouraging, and continually warning me of the dangerous passages we had to traverse; some Arabs preceded us with torches; the obscurity of this subterraneous vault, the singular effects of light on the dark and expressive countenances of my guides, the cries of the night birds and bats, to which these gloomy and solitary retreats serve as a refuge, the impure air which we breathed, made me almost fancy that I was the sport of some dream, in which the scenes of the wonderful lamp of Aladdin unfolded themselves to my view. We, however, reached the great apartment in the interior of the Pyramid, without seeing the king of the Gnomes, and I found only a very plain open sarcophagus, which is supposed to have been the tomb of one

of the Pharaohs. If these Pyramids were destined for initiation into the mysteries,* I can

* What renders this supposition still more probable, is the internal construction of the great Pyramid of Saccara, of which my husband discovered the entrance. This pyramid contains a great number of passages and corridors, and several chambers, in the walls of which were incrusted convex pieces of porcelain of various colours, which, when seen by torch-light, must have a pretty effect. There are also hieroglyphics above several doors, a circumstance which has not hitherto been remarked in the other Pyramids. The largest of these chambers, the walls of which were blackened by the smoke of the torches, contained, instead of a sarcophagus, a small sanctuary, formed of several blocks of stone, placed one upon another, into which a man could easily enter, and from which the voice of the oracle was probably made to issue. It is to be regretted that the sand of the desert blocked up the entrance to this Pyramid a short time after the operations which my husband had caused to be undertaken there. Five-and-twenty Arabs had worked there during two-and-twenty days. In order to reach the interior, they were obliged to descend into a well fifty feet deep. This passage was extremely dangerous; for a short time after my husband first went down, the side of the well fell in, and it was so choked up, that it took more than eight days to clear it again. If any persons had been inside of the Pyramid at such a moment they must have perished by a cruel death.

conceive that the singularity of this subterraneous passage may have served to exalt the imagination of the initiated, and, that by means of the obscurity which prevails in it, the terror which the place excites might be enhanced. I own, that I felt when I came out, a very lively sensation of pleasure at seeing the blue firmament and the light of day. I was so fatigued that it was impossible for me to go to the top of the Pyramid, from which there is said to be a most extensive prospect. My husband, however, who ascended it, told me that the view from it was by no means so beautiful as Savary and other travellers had pretended, on account of the chains of arid mountains, and the deserts of sand which surround them. We afterwards went round the other Pyramids, and the day beginning to draw to a close, we retired to our tents, which the Arabs had taken care to pitch near the great Pyramid. Here we found the Kiaschef of Gizeh, the chief of

this village and the district surrounding it; he was a person of some consequence, and having been informed of our arrival, had come to receive us and pay his respects. He brought with him several sheep, which were killed on the spot, roasted, and served whole.

This Kiaschef, who piqued himself on his knowledge of the manners of the world, and on being above all prejudices, took part in the entertainment, and made no scruple to drink of the wine which we had brought with us. I was amused at the awkward manner in which he used our knives and forks; the Turks not daring to make use at their meals of any instrument of this kind, they, consequently, avail themselves of their fingers, so that the Kiaschef forgetting now and then the character which he sustained, of being a man of *bon ton*, helped himself with his hands, then recollecting himself, took his knife and fork. His nephew whom we repeatedly invited to take part in our entertain-

ment, did not venture to comply, out of respect to his uncle, but remained standing the whole time. Mrs. Rosetti's mother, who, being a native of the Levant, had many acquaintances among the Turkish ladies, and also knew the wife of the Kiaschef, told me that the latter had informed her that she had lately made a present to her nephew, I believe on occasion of his birthday, of a beautiful Circassian slave. This anecdote, which has nothing remarkable in it, is mentioned here only as a proof of the singularity of the manners and customs of a people, who consider beings endowed with sensibility and reason, merely as objects of ostentation.

Night having set in, we left our tent to enjoy the picturesque effect of the Pyramids during bright moonlight. They rose towards the spangled firmament, like the giants in the fable, while their shadows extended far over the white and sandy tract which surrounds them.

The fires of our Arabs, our scattered tents, added to the singularity of our situation, diffused a peculiar and mysterious charm over this nocturnal scene.

The following day, after having, for the first time in my life, passed a night as it were in the open air, we bade adieu to these wonders of the world, and arrived early and without any accident at Cairo.

CHAPTER XI.

Departure from Cairo for Upper Egypt.

We left Cairo towards the middle of December, 1821. The Nile no longer inundated the country, which, clothed in all the beauty of spring, delighted our eyes with the sight of the loveliest vegetation. Every circumstance concurred to make this voyage agreeable; for my husband had endeavoured to render every thing as convenient and safe as possible. For this purpose we hired a vessel containing two commodious rooms, and a kind of ante-chamber for our domestics. Doctor Ricci, a young man of great talents, accompanied us as physician and draughtsman; an

interpreter, an Albanian renegado, had been taken into our service, and the Pacha granted us one of his officers for our security. Our cook had made ample provision that we should not stand in need of any thing; a necessary precaution in a country entirely destitute of inns; and, furnished with letters of recommendation from the Viceroy to the Pacha commanding the troops in Upper Egypt, we set sail. But fate had decreed that our patience should be put to a severe trial, as we had a contrary wind for three weeks, and, were twenty-one days in going from Cairo to Minieh; whereas on our return, impelled by the current and a dreadful hurricane, we were only two days.

These first three weeks, which were barren of interesting events, afford me only the recollection of a little adventure which was related to me, and which I will here repeat for the amusement of my readers. Forty leagues

from Cairo, the eye is struck by the appearance of a chain of calcareous mountains, which border the right bank of the river for a whole league. These mountains, called by the Arabs, Gebel-el-Tair, Mountains of Birds, from the immense quantity of birds which inhabit them, are pierced with a multitude of holes, which serve them as places of retreat, and which, from the singularity of their forms, resemble at a distance, hieroglyphic figures. The whitish colour of these mountains, which dazzles the eyes from the reflection of the rays of the sun, their melancholy asidity, the mournful cries of the birds which quit their retreats on the approach of the boats, all combined, filled the heart with a secret dread. Our boat very rapidly passing this place, I remained, with my eyes fixed upon these rocks, absorbed in one of those reveries for which we find it difficult to account; when Dr. Ricci, addressing me, said that this chain of mountains concealed from

view a Cophtic convent; the monks of which generally came down to ask alms of travellers. "It is in this convent," said he, "that I met with a very interesting adventure, on my first visit to Upper Egypt; and which seems to have something romantic in it, though it really occurred." These few words excited my curiosity; and I begged him to gratify it, which he did, by telling me the following story, nearly in these terms.

"Desirous of visiting Upper Egypt, I some years since accepted the offer of an English gentleman to accompany him thither. I had been struck, like you, by the singular form of these rocks, when my attention was attracted by a new object. I saw on their summit a man, who descended, by the means of a rope, with inconceivable agility; he soon disappeared, and afterwards throwing himself into the river, came up to our boat to ask alms for his convent. It was one of these Cophtic monks,

who came as usual, to implore the charity of those who passed by. The great address with which the man had made his descent, and some questions which we put to him relative to his convent, having excited our curiosity, we rowed towards the shore, and following our guide, who took the same steep and narrow path, cut in the rock, by which he had come down, we arrived, not without much difficulty, at the top, from which we discovered an immense horizon. At our feet the Nile, on the banks of which were many verdant spots, flowed in the distance through the fertile plains of the province of Minieh. Numerous villages, with their palm groves, and herds of buffaloes and flocks of goats, scattered over the plains, and the rich vegetation of this country presented the most pleasing and diversified scene. What a contrast struck us as we looked towards the spot which we had first reached. Blocks of stone, detached and scattered here

and there over a desert of sand, extending farther than the eye could reach, presented an image of chaos; the hand of man had never attempted to change this barren tract into a fruitful soil; and it is probable, that such an attempt would have proved vain. We then perceived a wretched hut, which the monk pointed out to us as his dwelling, situated in the midst of a small cemetery; and this convent, which resembled most other monasteries in nothing but its elevated position, did not appear to us at all calculated to inspire a love of retirement. Having satisfied our curiosity, we were going to quit this place, which had so little to recommend it, when we suddenly heard some words spoken in the beautiful language of Petrarch and Tasso. We turned to the side from which the voice proceeded, and saw an old man, whose lofty and majestic stature had not been bent with age, and who, introducing himself to us as the prior of the con-

vent, invited us in the most polite terms to enter and rest ourselves. Extremely surprised at meeting under the coarse habit of a Cophtic monk, with a man familiar with the language and customs of Europe, we accepted his invitation, and sat down on a stone bench; our host and three other monks, the only inmates of the convent, immediately set before us some dates, and bread, still quite warm, which they had just baked in the ground between two stones, according to the manner of the country.

"Meanwhile, I attentively surveyed the singular and surprising individual whom we had so unexpectedly met with in this desert place. A long silver beard descended in curls upon his breast; his eyes had retained all the fire and vivacity of youth, yet there was in his looks something gloomy, and expressive of profound melancholy; his features were dignified and regular; his mouth, which seemed as if it never

smiled, diminished the effect of his fine countenance, which might have been compared to a beautiful northern landscape, deprived, by a misty atmosphere, of the effects of light and of the brilliant tints of the south. Being no longer able to repress the interest, or rather the curiosity which I felt, I ventured with some hesitation to ask him some questions on his situation, and the reasons that could have induced him to adopt it, adding, that Egypt could certainly not be his native country. A transient expression of melancholy overspread his countenance, and being sensible of my indiscretion, I begged him to pardon my curiosity, in consideration of the interest I felt for him. He replied, that there was nothing particular in his history to merit the attention of any body; that he was a Roman by birth, and that being the youngest of his family, his parents had educated him for the ecclesiastical profession, for which he had a decided aversion; that flying from the paternal

roof, he passed the greater part of his life among infidels, whose faith he had even embraced; that the death of an adored being had made him sensible of the enormity of his faults, and his errors; and that, determined to pass the remainder of his life in penitence, he had chosen this wild and desert spot to end his days. He thus concluded his short narrative, and turning his eyes towards the cemetry, added: Port of the wretched! the only refuge against the storms of life, why dost thou not present thyself to the imagination of men, when, agitated by tumultuous passions, and unbridled desires, they act as if their life were without limit, and their afflictions without end; whereas, everything tends towards thee, and the remembrance of the good we may have done in this world, alone accompanies us into the next, and survives our death! Moved by these words, and the expression which accompanied them, we took leave of the venerable old man, who gave us his blessing on our de-

parture. Nine months after, on my return from Upper Egypt, being desirous of once more seeing the Cophtic prior, I took the road to his convent; as I approached, one of the monks perceiving me, pointed to a fresh grave. He had ceased to suffer."

CHAPTER XII.

Grotto of Benihassan.—Arrival at Radamoun.—Hermopolis.—Alarm caused by some Arabs.—Instance of courage in Ibrahim Pacha.

Not wishing to particularize the numerous monuments we met with during the whole of this voyage, and which have been sufficiently described by more learned and able pens than mine, I shall speak only of those things which appeared to me the most interesting. Near Benihassan we went on shore, and passing over an arid tract, began to climb the rocks in which caverns are hewn, which served as tombs for the ancient Egyptians. The sides of them are covered with paintings, in very good preservation, representing their several professions,

and some of their diversions, for instance, the hunting of the Gazelle, and some kinds of gymnastic exercises. These caverns appear to have been the burying places of the working classes of the people; for we found no representations of triumphal processions, or scenes of initiation, such as we afterwards saw in the royal tombs at Thebes.

On our arrival at Radamoun, we were well received by an Englishman who is the director of a sugar refinery, belonging to the Pacha. The Arabs, who were jealous of this situation, had reported, in order to depreciate the sugar manufactured by a Christian, that to clarify it he had employed the blood of hogs, which being an unclean animal, is abhorred by the Arabs, and from that time he was obliged, in order to pacify their scruples, and induce them to purchase, to clarify with eggs. It is only in a country so abounding in poultry as Egypt, that it is possible to make use of such a process,

which requires an enormous quantity of eggs: in Mr. Brinn's manufactory, a thousand are every day required for this purpose.

The environs of Radamoun, and a great extent of country in Upper Egypt, which we afterwards visited, contain plantations of sugar-cane; the natives are fond of sucking these canes, which they consider an excellent medicine. We remained one day in this place, from which we made an excursion to the magnificent remains of the temple of Hermopolis, the columns of which are still painted in brilliant colours. Opposite to Radamoun, on the other bank of the Nile, are the ruins of the ancient Antinoe, a considerable city, built by the Emperor Adrian, in memory of his favourite Antinous, on the spot where the latter perished in attempting to bathe in the river. Near this place are the grottoes of Ababdeh, remarkable for the paintings with which they are adorned.

The following morning my husband wishing

to complete some excavations near Hermopolis, desired me to proceed slowly on my voyage, saying that he would follow me in a few hours, in a kind of gondola, called Cangie, which, being rowed by ten men, would soon overtake the large boat. I consented to this proposal, and continued my voyage.

I had passed some hours in reading in my cabin, but my husband not arriving, I went out to see what was going forward, and perceived that a favourable and very high wind had just risen, and that we were sailing with great rapidity. Seeing that it would be impossible for my husband to overtake us, I ordered them to lower the sails and cast anchor, but the Reis, (captain of the vessel) either from ill will, or because he did not wish to lose so favourable an opportunity of proceeding on the voyage, pretended not to understand me, and went on, notwithstanding the repeated orders that I gave him through the interpreter. My uneasiness

increased; impelled by an impetuous wind, we seemed to cleave the air, till night-fall obliged us to approach the shore, and cast anchor. Several hours thus passed in a cruel suspense, when a sudden noise, and loud and lively vociferations, struck my ear. I sent my maid servant to ascertain the cause of the quarrel; she returned, accompanied by an interpreter, who declared that this place was very unsafe; that several travellers had been attacked, plundered, and murdered there a short time before, and that the dispute which I had heard arose from the language of some Arabs who had approached our vessel, and appeared to have ill designs. To form an idea of my situation, it must be observed, that we had long since distrusted this interpreter, whose physiognomy displeased me extremely. Constantly armed with a brace of loaded pistols, which he wore in his girdle, his language, his appearance, his being a renegado, all conspired

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to excite alarm. I therefore saw in a moment that his intention was to intimidate me by exaggerated accounts, and, if a favourable opportunity should offer, to avail himself, in concert with the captain, of my being left for a time alone in their power. I told him, therefore, in a pretty firm tone, that I was by no means afraid of the banditti without, and that for those in the boat, I should know how to make myself respected by them. Notwithstanding this bold declaration, I was by no means at my ease; I believe, however, that I succeeded in awing them in my turn, for the noise soon after ceased, and order was restored. In fact, if these people had any bad intentions, what could I have done? It is true, that I had with me the Turkish officer of the Pacha, of whose good will there was no doubt; but it was impossible for me to make myself understood by him; besides, what could he have done in my defence against the great number

of Arabs in the vessel, under the command of the captain, and those who might perhaps come from the environs. I, however, called my husband's valet de chambre, an honest German, who was entirely devoted to us: I made him sleep at the door of my cabin, and giving him a brace of loaded pistols, which always hung at my bedside, ordered him to fire at the first who should come and dare to disturb me. In this manner I passed the night in very painful anxiety, and it was not till the following morning, about ten o'clock, that my husband arrived, which gave me very great joy. I need not say, that he severely reprimanded the interpreter and the captain, who excused themselves, by saying, that they had themselves been very uneasy on my account; but that they never would have suffered any harm to happen to me. The Arabs have always some pretext at hand; however, it is almost certain, that the inhabitants of this country

had ill intentions with respect to us; and that but for the salutary fear of punishment which Mahomet Ali has inspired into them, they would not have failed to plunder and ill-use us, in concert with the Arabs of our vessel. We learnt then, that this whole country had been infected by robbers, and that the security at present enjoyed was owing only to the son of the Pacha, who had been obliged to resort to very rigorous measures, by executing a great number of these wretches.

One instance of the intrepidity of this young prince was related to us on this occasion. Being in this province with a number of troops much inferior to the Arabs, who committed the most dreadful excesses, he learnt that their chief, who had retired with his troops into a neighbouring town, had sworn to assassinate him. Ibrahim Pacha, who might expect to be attacked, and probably to be overpowered by numbers, resolved to antici-

pate them, and with some of his most resolute soldiers, suddenly approaching the house occupied by the chief of the band, he took it by storm, and, notwithstanding the vigorous resistance of the banditti, seized their chief, carried him away, and had him executed upon the spot. The other Arabs, having scarcely had time to be informed of this event, no sooner learnt that their chief had fallen into the hands of the prince, and had been put to death by his orders, than they were seized with terror, and, far from thinking of attack, sought safety in flight.

CHAPTER XIII.

Employment of our Time.—Hunting.—Anteopolis.—Girge.—Father Ladislaus—Abydos.

THE month of January, in which we now were, is certainly the most favourable season for visiting Upper Egypt. The heat is very moderate, and the verdure in its greatest lustre. All nature seemed attired in its festal robe; the air was embalmed with the richest perfume, arising, undoubtedly, from the fields of beans, which are cultivated to a great extent in Upper Egypt, and were then in blossom. We were delighted with the beauty of the climate, and the pleasant scenes which we visited; but, that we might

examine minutely the various monuments that we met with on the way, we proceeded but very slowly, making the vessel stop at all those places where we might expect to meet with curious and interesting objects.

To give my readers an idea of the manner in which we spent our days, when they did not afford any thing particularly interesting in the study of antiquities, I will give them a sketch of our occupations and amusements. We rose very early, because the extreme coolness of the nights and the evening dews, which are very prejudicial to the eyes, obliged us to retire betimes. After our breakfast, which consisted of coffee and buffaloes' milk, which we never had any difficulty to procure, my husband and Dr. Ricci, provided with fowling-pieces, and myself, attended by my little negro, went on shore: and while the gentlemen were occupied in their sport, I amused myself with botanizing, and walking about the

country. After this morning's promenade, we returned to the boat, the gentlemen generally with some game, and I with my basket filled with cresses and aromatic herbs, which grow in great abundance at this season, and which made an excellent sallad for our dinner. Sometimes, also, while the boat was slowly sailing along, we mounted our asses, and rode into the interior of the country, or, going along the bank, visited the villages, surrounded with groves of palms, where we excited, in no small degree, the curiosity of the inhabitants.

It was in one of these rides along the Nile, that I was one day seized with terror at the unexpected sight of an enormous lizard four feet long, called Vareus, which I at first sight took for a crocodile, which it closely resembled. This poor creature, which is said to be of a very harmless and gentle disposition, was doubtless as much frightened as myself on perceiving me, for it leaped from a little height over my head,

into the Nile, with such precipitation, that I escaped with being splashed and wetted, instead of being devoured, as I had expected. Returning home we amused ourselves for several hours till dinner time.

Our dinners, as may easily be supposed, were very plain. We had taken with us a supply of potatoes, which are imported from Europe, rice, lentils, French beans, and dried fruits; as to fresh vegetables we could procure none, as the inhabitants do not cultivate any. Besides this we had mutton, which the natives esteem very much, and fowls, of which we had brought a great number in our boat. My husband's sport generally produced us some turtledoves, thrushes, ducks, wild cocks, and pelicans, the flesh of which has an agreeable odour. Our European gourmands, would probably have been but ill contented with this fare; for I know some who would give the world for a turkey with truffles. On the other hand, we had excellent dates, honey,

and fresh eggs, which are so abundant in Upper Egypt, that forty are sold for a para: a small coin, forty of which are equal to an Egyptian piastre, 400 to a Spanish dollar. We had taken care to provide ourselves with a little library, and our evenings were agreeably spent in reading.

In this manner we advanced till we reached the site of the ancient city of Anteopolis, the magnificent temple of which, adorned with a portico of fourteen columns, was still standing at the time of the French expedition, but was successively destroyed by the waters of the Nile. We found nothing but an enormous block of granite, partly thrown down, and which is frequently visited by the women of the country, who placing themselves on the top of it try to slide down, and firmly believe that this is a cure for barrenness.

On arriving at Girge, the principal town of

the Thebais, we went to see a monk of the propaganda at Rome, who has for several years been the sole occupant of a convent dedicated to Saint George, the patron of the town, which in the first ages of Christianity received his name. Father Ladislaus appeared to us to be a well-informed and deserving man; he had a fine library, consisting of the best Italian authors, of which he kindly lent us some volumes. The choice of his books, did not seem to indicate a gloomy and austere character, and I suppose that the sprightly anecdotes of Boccacio sometimes contribute to enliven the solitude and dull uniformity of his monastic life.

The convent of this father was situated out of the town; he showed us the little church belonging to it, of which there is no appearance on the outside. It is a kind of vault, which receives light only through some air holes in the ceiling, and is remarkably plain. In times

of trouble, the monks of this convent had been exposed to a thousand tribulations, and could venture to celebrate mass only in secret. It is here that the worthy father Ladislaus performed alone, the other monks having successively died, all the functions of his sacred office; his congregation consists of a pretty considerable number of Cophtic families, who, for want of priests of their own, had joined the Roman Catholic Church. I could not but admire the heroism and self-denial of this worthy ecclesiastic, who renouncing all the conveniences of life, retired alone to the midst of these deserts, to guide a small number of souls in the road to salvation. He afterwards made us ascend the platform of the convent, where he cultivates some European flowers, and whence he enjoys a pleasing prospect over the country and the environs of the town. That he may not attract too much notice from the inhabitants, he does not wear

the dress of his order; a long loose woollen robe of a dark blue colour, such as is worn by the rich inhabitants of Upper Egypt, and the Oriental turban, give him entirely the appearance of an Arab.

From Girge, we made an excursion on asses belonging to the convent, to Abra Madfoun, the ancient Abydos, where this monk superintends the excavations carrying on for Mr. Drovetti.

We found here the remains of a magnificent palace, which, according to Strabo, had been consecrated to Memnon. This place was anciently supposed to preserve, as well as Memphis, the remains of Osiris, and rich people were for that reason buried there in preference to other situations. The excavations undertaken in its vicinity have afforded very valuable articles, the greater part of which now adorn the Museum at Turin. On our return

we took leave with regret of the good monk, who had the kindness to supply us with some loaves of new bread, which was the more agreeable to us as we had been long deprived of it.

CHAPTER XIV.

Slaves.—Their religious faith.—Keneh.—Female Dancers.—Potteries.—Ababdeh.—Crocodiles.—Denderah.

SOME days after, we met several boats filled with negro slaves of both sexes, coming from Darfour and Sennaar, and laden besides with elephant's teeth, ostrich feathers, gold dust, parrots, &c. The people who are engaged in this traffic are called gelaps; they generally carry off children by force or by stratagem, and even frequently purchase them of the parents themselves. Not being accustomed to this sight, we felt at the view of these poor wretches, deprived of their liberty and forced from their native land, a sentiment of pity which would

not have been so lively if we had known the state of destitution and misery which they experience in their own country.

The Turks are generally humane towards their slaves, who, besides, enjoy the protection of the laws in an especial manner; for they have a right to demand to be resold whenever their condition becomes unhappy, and their masters venture to ill-treat them, which makes their situation almost equal to that of our servants in Europe. A great number of these negroes are employed in guarding the harems. The Pacha of Egypt, who is very magnificent in all his presents, sometimes sends several hundreds at once to the Grand Seignor. The negresses are particularly employed within doors; most of them are very intelligent, and learn with facility all sorts of female work.

The Europeans, who dare not have white slaves in Egypt, have now obtained the right of purchasing black ones; hence all the rich

families at Cairo generally have some in their service. We ourselves purchased a boy whom we afterwards brought to Europe, and who gave proofs of the happiest natural disposition. This child, who learned several languages in a short time, told us in the sequel in what manner he had been carried off with several of his brothers and sisters, while they were all at play in a garden. Most of these negroes are pagans. Mrs. Rosetti had a young female slave of a very intelligent and mild disposition; she one day found her on her knees, looking at the moon in a kind of ecstacy and adoration. Wishing to develope in her some religious ideas and the knowledge of a Supreme Being she spoke to her of God as the great creator of all things; of his goodness and omnipotence, and asked her whether she intended to adore him, when she prostrated herself before the moon? The poor creature began to laugh, and replied that she knew very well that Mrs. Rosetti was only

making game of her, by speaking to her of a Being who could not exist such as she described him, and that in kneeling she had only followed a custom which she had learned in her childhood. How many Christians are there among us who are as far from a true notion of God, as this poor negress!

We soon after arrived at Keneh. This town is remarkable for its potteries, called bardaques, which have the property of filtering the water and keeping it cool; the manufacturers even possess the art of impregnating them with perfumes, the odour of which is communicated to the water, and these are preferred by the natives. It is very probable that the manufacture of these vases is of ancient origin, for we find paintings of their elegant forms on a great number of old monuments. For the purpose of conveyance, rafts are made, composed entirely of these vases, which are floated down the Nile, and detached successively as they are sold.

The caravan of the Red Sea annually passes through this town, where it makes some stay, which is of considerable advantage to the inhabitants: accordingly we saw a great number of females of the privileged caste of dancers. These women, though they frightfully disfigure their faces, dying their cheeks with orange and their eyebrows black, did not appear to me altogether destitute of attractions; their figure in particular had something delicate and graceful. They were loaded with ornaments of brass and silver, and wore round their arms and legs solid rings, which they have the art to pass over the hand; they even had smaller ones in their nostrils and on their toes. Their taste for ornament is also displayed by the great number of necklaces of Venetian glass beads of all colours, which they wore round their neck; this custom is common to all the women of Upper Egypt, Nubia, and the interior of Africa, where these glass beads are valued as highly as gold. We

had taken a large quantity with us, which we distributed among the natives, and thereby secured a favourable reception on the whole journey.

It was at Keneh too, that we first saw some of the people called Ababdeh, a nomade tribe inhabiting the environs of Suez, and the coasts of the Red Sea. Their country, which is mountainous and arid, affords them no resources for agriculture; and they accordingly employ themselves in rearing camels and sheep, which they afterwards sell on the banks of the Nile, in exchange for rice, dourrah, and tobacco. This little traffic supports their wretched existence; yet, notwithstanding their excessive poverty, which is so great that a pipe of tobacco is to them a luxury, there is no tribe of Arabs so jealous of its independence, and so passionately fond of liberty, as the Ababdeh. Their head-dress is very singular; by the help of some pounds of mutton suet, they form their hair, which is naturally very thick, into a kind

of toupee, so large that the head appears three times its actual size, and it would be impossible to put a comb into it. As the smell of suet is by no means agreeable, it may be imagined that the same is the case with their head-dress, particularly in warm weather; but they overlook these trifling inconveniences and are the more vain of this ornament, as it often costs them several days' labour to arrange it to their fancy. The remainder of their toilette appeared more neglected than their head-dress, for in truth they had dispensed themselves from every kind of vestment. It is extremely curious that my husband procured an ancient peruke found in a mummy-case, exactly resembling the head-dresses of the Ababdeh and the Berebres of the present age.

On leaving Keneh we for the first time saw crocodiles; soon after, we met with them in great numbers, basking in the sun on little sand banks, but on the approach of the vessel they plunged into the water. The gentlemen put out the

small boat, to chase these animals, and wounded one, which left traces of blood on the sand. The flesh of the crocodile, especially of the young one, is said to have a very agreeable flavour, resembling eel. The absurd tales which people have taken pleasure in relating of this animal, are for the most part fables, created by the imagination of some travellers. It sometimes, indeed, happens, that persons who are so imprudent as to bathe near the crocodiles, become their prey; but in general, they fly at the approach of man, and never attack him. It is well known that they have a powerful enemy in the ichneumon, which is very fond of their eggs. I had occasion at Alexandria to see two of these little creatures, which belong to the rat genus. Their cry has in it something peculiar and piercing, which does not resemble the voice of a quadruped; it is like the noise made by a hatchet violently striking a board.

When we came near Dendera, we had to go nearly two leagues to reach the temple. We had the pleasure of admiring the zodiac, which has since been removed, and carried to Paris, very skilfully indeed, but very unfortunately for the appearance of this temple, which was indisputably the best preserved of any in Egypt. If this mode of proceeding is continued, this classic land will soon have nothing to offer but recollections, while all the cabinets of Europe will be enriched with its spoils. They manufacture at Dendera very pretty rosaries, made of the seeds of the doum, a kind of date, the fruit of which resembles a cocoa nut. It was also in the environs of this place, that we saw the first trees of this species, the fan-shaped leaves of which have a very singular effect. These rosaries are dyed of different colours. The Turks make much use of them, and are seldom seen without a rosary in their hands.

CHAPTER XV.

Arrival at Thebes.—Eight days stay.—Carnac.—The two Monolithe colossuses.—Combat of dogs with the bird of Osiris.

On the 17th of January, we arrived at Thebes, whose origin is lost in the fabulous ages of antiquity, while its majestic and gigantic ruins still attest its past grandeur. The portico of the temple of Luxor first strikes the eye of the traveller: but others before me have described these magnificent remains; I shall therefore content myself with speaking of the impression which I experienced at the sight of the ruins of Carnac.

It was about sunset that we approached this temple, which is half a league from Luxor;

the avenues of sphinxes leading to it, now half buried in the sand, and mutilated, seemed to invite the mind to meditation, and to prepare it for all the mysteries of the ancient and sacred worship which were celebrated within its walls. On perceiving this forest of columns, these majestic porticoes, these obelisks, still standing, and these pylones, which time and the fanatic rage of the conquerors of Egypt have been unable to destroy, we are struck with silent astonishment, and the imagination is surrounded with all the illusions of past ages. Ascending some decayed steps, I reached a kind of platform, from which I had a complete view of the whole extent of the ground occupied by the temple, and of the surrounding edifices. But how shall I describe the truly magnificent and, without doubt, unparalleled scene which disclosed itself to my eyes, which were besides delighted by the magic hues of the setting sun, whose last beams falling on obelisks of the most beautiful

rose granite, gave them tints of a bright purple, which formed a striking contrast with the blue sky, that served as a back-ground to the picture. Long shadows fall upon an innumerable quantity of columns, extending farther than the eye can reach; here a suit of apartments still points out the sumptuous abode of those powerful kings, whose voices called all these wonders into existence; there my eyes dwelt upon a confused mass of ruins, of mutilated colossuses, and broken columns, from which no just idea can now be formed of the whole of this fine edifice:—but in their actual state of decay, they still present traces of the striking grandeur which distinguished all the productions of Egyptian architecture, the extraordinary dimensions of which seem to have been produced by the all-powerful will of a superior genius, rather than by the hand of man.

The style of this architecture is grave, like the character and manners of the people that

adopted it; every part of it is at once simple, striking, austere, and sublime. It is evident, that the religious ideas of the Egyptians, respecting the immortality of the soul and its return to this world, induced them to give their buildings that solidity and grand character, which distinguished their works from those of the Greeks and the other nations of antiquity. They wished to survive posterity; they fancied they were working for eternity; and yet these magnificent monuments, these temples dedicated to the protecting divinities of nature, if they have not already crumbled into dust like the hand which raised them, they are nevertheless in a state of decay, which proves the impotence of man to eternize the works of his hand:—such is the general lot of things here below! It is among the ruins of Thebes that all kinds of worldly ambition, even the most noble of those which inflame genius and imagination, are reduced to

their true value;—it is there that we should come to meditate on the destiny of nations, and on the nothingness of the powers of the earth. Yet, while we are impressed with the inutility of the efforts of man in his struggle with time, the contemplation of these ruins is far from inspiring complete discouragement,—and we feel conscious that the being capable of such sublime conceptions, and of such mighty labours, is called to higher destinies and a more noble ambition. Here Genius survives Destruction, and like the phœnix of the fable, reviving from its ashes, the soul soars victorious from the bosom of the tomb to the abode of immortality.

We quitted the ruins of Carnac, absorbed in these meditations, and penetrated with a sentiment of religious respect which it is difficult to define. Thus ended the first day that we passed at Thebes.

The following days were employed in visit-

ing the palace of Medynet Abou, the small temple Gournou, the Memnonium, near which is the colossal torso of Osymandias; and which is supposed to be the tomb of that king, and the two gigantic statues, known in the country under the name of Thama and Chama. These Monolithe statues were already highly celebrated in the most remote antiquity; one of them, which was considered as the statue of Memnon, emitted sounds at sunrise; many Greek and Latin inscriptions, carved on the pedestal and the legs of the statue, attest this fact; and thus point it out as the one mentioned by the Ancients, under the name of Memnon. Among other names is that of the Empress Sabina, that interesting and unfortunate woman, who had come, like so many others, to hear the marvellous sounds of this son of Aurora. Several persons in Egypt, worthy of credit, have assured us, that they had themselves heard at sunrise, a sound re-

sembling that of the cords of an instrument struck with violence; and it is generally believed, that this sound proceeds from the sudden effect of the rays of the sun on the atmosphere, and of their reaction on the stone.

Several ancient authors, as Strabo, Pliny, and Pausanias, make mention of a palace, in which these colossuses were contained, but which in their time was already destroyed; and the ruins of columns and monolithes dispersed about these statues, over a great extent of the surrounding plain, renders this assertion very probable. By the help of a ladder, I myself ascended the pedestal of the colossus; and I experienced a sentiment difficult to be described, when I was told the meaning of some of the inscriptions, which so clearly prove the identity of this monument with the colossus so famous in antiquity, when I reflected that, in the time of the Emperor

Adrian, for most of the inscriptions are dated from that period, people came from a distance to behold this wonder, of which ancient writers have not even been able to point out the author, so entirely is the history of most of these monuments lost in the obscurity of ages. Cambyses, whose destructive rage spared none of the monuments of Thebes, caused this colossus to be cut in two, in order to ascertain whence the miraculous sound might proceed. This curiosity was not gratified; and it was not till several ages afterwards, under the Roman Prefects, that the statue was repaired.

On the following day I witnessed a curious scene; it was a war between the wild dogs, which inhabit the ruins of Thebes, and the great hawks which abound in Upper Egypt. Our cook had just killed a sheep, and had thrown the intestines on the bank of the river. I was sitting with my eyes fixed upon the magnificent ruins of Luxor, when I saw a crowd

of hungry dogs issue from them, which desiring to have their share of the feast, immediately fell upon the refuse of the animal; but their appetite was not to be gratified so easily as they had expected; for other creatures, hovering in the air above us, had previously seen all that had passed, and the moment that the cook withdrew, and the dogs approached, a swarm of hawks and vultures, rapidly cleaving the air, rushed upon their prey, and disputed it with their rivals. A very curious battle then began; the bird of Osiris, by turns attacking or attacked, sometimes succeeded in snatching the booty from the jaws of the savage dog, which yelped and barked after it, while the victor, rising into the air, seemed to mock at his impotent cries.

CHAPTER XVI.

Tombs of the Kings.—Hyenas.—Serpents.—Last View of the Environs of Thebes.

THE last day but one before our departure from Thebes was spent in visiting the tombs of the kings. These tombs so powerfully attract the attention of the traveller, that they well deserve the first place in my Recollections. Landing on the left bank of the Nile, we mounted our asses, which were in readiness for us, and passing through the village of Gournah, rode towards the chain of the Libyan Mountains, which, destitute of all vegetation, presented to the eye only innumerable excavations, which were the hypogeums of the an-

cient city of Thebes. We soon after entered the sacred city, which contains the last remains of those magnificent kings, whose works we still admire. Steep and barren rocks confine the road which formerly led to this abode of peace. The ancient kings of Egypt, certainly could not have chosen a more secluded and mournful spot, or one more favourable to meditation. Loose and scattered stones now render the access to them difficult.

Nothing disturbs the silence of this place, not even the humming of a single insect; in fact, none could exist in this desert spot. The farther you advance the more frightful is the appearance of these rocks, which at last present immense surfaces quite perpendicular. It is in a manner between two walls, formed by nature, that we have to proceed for a whole hour; the mind feels oppressed, and divided between a sensation of fear and expectation. But soon new wonders succeed all those which

we have before admired and described, rivet our attention, and, as it were, complete our knowledge of this extraordinary people. It must be owned, that it is not till we have visited the tombs of the kings that we can form a just idea of the high degree of civilization, luxury, and multifarious knowledge of the ancient Egyptians.

I visited four of these tombs; the most magnificent is undoubtedly the one the entrance of which was discovered by Belzoni. A long vault or gallery, hewn in the rock, leads to the different apartments, and thence to the principal chamber, which contained the superb alabaster sarcophagus, which has since been sent to England by Mr. Salt. On both sides of the entrance gallery are small cabinets, containing fresco paintings, so extremely beautiful and brilliant, that they look as if they had just received the last touch from the artist's pencil. They are for the most part scenes of

domestic life, rural occupations, the different trades, represented with all the utensils necessary for their exercise, allegories and arabesques of the most tasteful designs. The ceilings are painted as in our most elegant modern apartments; and if the authenticity of these tombs were not indisputable, we should be tempted to apprehend some deception, so astonishing does it appear that time should have respected works which were completed so many centuries ago.

After having minutely examined these small apartments, we returned to the principal gallery, the walls of which are likewise painted in fresco. Both sides of the wall, at the entrance, are covered with numerous hieroglyphics. Signor Ricci, who had copied them some time before for Mr. Banks, counted as many as two and twenty thousand. If they could be deciphered, we should most probably find an account of the life of the king who is

buried here; and being placed at the entrance of the tomb, they would serve to explain the pictures. It is to be hoped that the efforts and happy commencement made in this difficult study, by Mr. Champollion junior, will be soon crowned with the most brilliant success. What additional importance would the monuments of Egypt then acquire in the promotion of historical knowledge!

The largest chamber of these catacombs, in which the sarcophagus was found, is pretty high, and filled with paintings in perfect preservation. They chiefly represent scenes of initiation; we see the king received by all the protecting divinities of Egypt. The outlines of the designs are well defined and correct; the colours brilliant, and the smallest details carefully finished with taste and discernment. The figure of Isis, as she is represented in all the religious paintings and sculptures of the Egyptians, is not destitute of elegance;

her profile is regular and resembles that of the Grecian figures:—which proves that the stiffness of the Egyptian figures does not arise from a want of talent, but from certain rules adopted for the objects of their worship, and from which they did not dare to deviate; and that but for their religion, which impeded the progress of art, the Egyptians would have attained the beau-ideal as well as the Greeks. This regular profile, which they have given to most of their divinities, except Typhon, appears to me to demonstrate that the opinion which makes the ancient Egyptians descendants of the Negro race, is without foundation. It is true that the complexion of the figures is very swarthy, and approaching to black; but the Ethiopians of our times have still this colour, without having the flat nose, crisp and woolly hair of the Negroes:—besides, their natural aversion to that race of men seems to me as good as

proved by the very figure of Typhon, whom they considered as the genius of evil.

I also admired in these tombs, the details of the drapery and the arms of the divinities represented;—their tunics seemed to be made of rich stuffs embroidered with exquisite taste. We likewise see magnificent canopies and carpets, musical instruments, and furniture of the most elegant forms; which we immediately perceive to have served as models to the Greeks. In short, every thing we see makes us forget the lapse of ages, while we are walking in one of the galleries or sumptuous habitations of that remote period. When we come to reflect, we ask by what means the ancient Egyptians were enabled to attain this high degree of civilization; and how they procured so many articles of luxury and convenience, which require a great perfection in the arts and manufactures; which is the more astonishing, as it was formerly supposed that

they had no commercial intercourse with their neighbours. But since the discovery of all the wonders contained at Thebes, it is evident that commerce, and doubtless a very active commerce with India, could alone give such an extraordinary impulse to their manufactures, by bringing to them all the riches of the known world. Whatever may be the resources of an agricultural country, and however great may be the fertility of the Egyptian soil, it is certain, that without the assistance of commerce, they never could have supplied the wants of the many important cities whose ruins we still admire, crowded together in so small an extent of cultivated land.

Besides, the bas-reliefs sculptured on various monuments, particularly on the walls of the palace of Medinet Abou, leave no doubt of the reality of the existence of Sesostris, and of his conquests in Egypt. The affinity between the Egyptian mythology and that of the Hindoos,

and the system of castes, nearly the same in both countries, sufficiently prove how ancient the intercourse between the two nations must have been; and it remains only to learn, which of the two preceded the other in the career of civilization.

The other tombs which I visited bear a great analogy to the one I have just described, in a very imperfect manner indeed; but which is undoubtedly already known to my readers from the ample account of Mr. Belzoni. In these tombs, however, there is a great variety in the subjects and composition of the paintings; as we see in our modern galleries a holy family, by Raphael, next to the dressing-room of a lady at her toilette, by Breughel, or some festive scene of the Flemish school.

One might pass whole days there, and continually make new discoveries: and the interest which we experience, and the curiosity they excite, are equally gratified. In one of these

tombs, we found thousands of small wooden figures, representing mummies, which I imagine were used by way of amulets, to avert the influence of evil spirits.

We every-where discovered in these catacombs, traces of the fanatic rage of the soldiers of Cambyses; or, perhaps, also of the avidity of the Arabs; for most of the lids of the sarcophagi were broken. The Arabs, knowing the taste of the Europeans for antiquities, are impelled by a desire of gain, to search in the temples and hypogeums in the environs of Thebes. They frequently destroy articles of value, in the hope of meeting with hidden treasures; and their superstition, which makes them look upon all foreigners as magicians, easily persuades them that treasures are the only object of the expeditions which they see them undertake. However, their eagerness in bringing to light precious remains of art, mummy cases, and innumerable amulets, which

these catacombs contain, has already done them much service, and greatly enriched them. The Arabs in the environs of Thebes formerly lived in extreme misery, and thought only of pillage; but for several years past, the great number of strangers, the excavations in which they employ them, and the sale of the antiquities which they find, have procured them a degree of comfort, which even allows them to keep some cattle. Many Arabs now live in these catacombs; which, after having served as tombs for the inhabitants of ancient Thebes, subsequently afforded an asylum to the pious anchorites of the first ages of the church. We still frequently see the figure of Isis transformed into a Madonna; or that of Osiris, changed into a saint; and one might say, that the soil or the climate of Egypt favours every kind of wild fancy and metamorphosis.

After having spent several hours in visiting the tombs of the kings, I felt in need of rest;

it was the 23d of January, and the heat on that day was excessive; the thermometer in the shade was at thirty-three degrees of Reaumur. Besides, it is not a little fatiguing to examine accurately, with a torch in the hand, the paintings in these subterraneous vaults, breathing an extremely hot and insalubrious air. We then see the more reason to admire the indefatigable patience and perseverance of those who have been employed in this labour, and it seems almost inconceivable how they could endure such great exertions. We then eagerly sought for a little shade, but how was it to be found near these barren rocks, which, as I have already said, rise perpendicularly? We rested at the entrance of the tomb of Belzoni, where the rock projecting, formed a kind of roof, and partly protected us from the heat of the sun. Our dinner was ready for us, and after we had been so long engaged with the dead and past ages, we began to think

about the present, and of taking some repose, of which we stood in great need. Some hours afterwards we quitted this gloomy valley, and soon reached the vessel.

There are many hyenas in the environs of Thebes, and during the night we frequently heard the howlings of these furious animals. When Europeans intend visiting a catacomb, they take the precaution of firing a pistol before they enter, in order to oblige these creatures to quit their retreat. A European, whom his great love of antiquities induced to remain in these savage dens, told us that he was sometimes visited during the night by these animals, but that, thanks to the vigilance of his dog, he had succeeded in dislodging them. I saw two of them during my stay at Alexandria, which a European had brought up and almost tamed,—at least he was able to touch them: but their natural ferocity is much more

difficult to conquer than that of the lion or even the tiger.

We never met with any serpents during the whole of our journey in Upper Egypt, the season not being sufficiently advanced: for the serpents of these climates require excessive heat, and keep under ground during the winter months. Some of them are extremely venomous, others not very dangerous, and these are supposed to be the kind which the ancient Egyptians revered as emblems of the good genius. Dr. Ricci, who had made a nine months stay at Thebes, told me that one day taking his dinner near the catacombs, he saw ten of these animals, four or five feet in length, of a flesh colour inclining to rose, approach and glide over some vessels filled with milk, which were on the ground, in order to drink. Their body in this most graceful position, seemed to be a part of the vessel, and to form the handle, and it was doubtless in this manner, that these animals

gave the ancients the idea of those beautiful vases, the elegant forms of which we still endeavour to imitate.

Before taking leave of Thebes, I would willingly give my readers a general view of its environs. The magnificent ruins, of which I have only given a slight sketch, are situated on both sides of the river, which is confined between the chains of the Arabian and Libyan Mountains: though these mountains are barren, they have a picturesque effect by their contrast with the splended verdure of the plain. The environs of Thebes, it is true, have none of those tufted woods which always embellish a landscape, but the whole valley resembles a verdant carpet; small groves of acacia, groups of palms and tamarinds, scattered here and there, partially conceal the superb ruins, which give a truly sublime character to the landscape. The tint of the stones of which these edifices are built; the miserable huts

which are set up against their ruins, and which look like swallows' nests against the walls of a palace; the constantly azure sky; and the brilliant sun, which illumines with its splendour the places where his worship was formerly celebrated with so much pomp, add to the magic effect of the whole. But it is sunset in particular, which gives new beauties to the landscape which I have been describing. The whitish limestone mountains which enclose the valley of Thebes, then assume tints of pink, violet, and purple, and present to the eye nearly the same shades as the high Alps of Switzerland. Soon, however, the twilight, so short in the countries near the tropics, envelopes with its shadowy veil the stately Thebes, and the watch-fires of the Arabs shine alone with a faint light, near the hypogeums of the ancient city.

CHAPTER XVII.

Departure from Thebes.—Esne.—Eyleythie.—Edfou.—Silsilis.—Ombos.—Arrival at Assouan.—Elephantina.

THE following day we continued our journey. Being in want of wood, the Arabs supplied us with a considerable quantity, consisting of the remains of mummy cases, among which were some very valuable pieces which my husband saved from the auto-da-fè. The grave inhabitants of ancient Egypt certainly never suspected the use which would be made of their last abode. The mummy cases are made of sycamore wood, which is extremely hard.*

* A present was made me at Thebes, of a small workbox of this wood, which was found in the catacombs of that city. It was in such good preservation, that on opening it, winders with thread on them were found inside.

This tree resembles our oak; it is a pity that it is now hardly ever to be met with in Upper Egypt, where it must have been plentiful, to judge by the use that was made of it. The smell of the wood which we burnt was almost intolerable; it was covered with bitumen and varnish, which strongly affect the nerves,—this at least is the effect it produced upon me, and we were well punished for having thus disturbed the last repose of the dead. In a country, however, so destitute of fuel as Egypt, we were obliged to content ourselves with that which necessity had procured us. In many parts of the country, they even use camels' dung, which, mixed with straw, and dried in the sun, is made to serve instead of fuel.

At Esne, the ancient Latopolis, we visited a temple, which, to judge from the representations of the numerous bas-reliefs, had been dedicated to Jupiter Ammon. The temple, which is adorned with a magnificent portico

and a zodiac, sufficiently known by the great French work on Egypt, is situated in the middle of the city, which you have to cross in order to reach it. We saw here an extraordinary bustle, occasioned by a fair which had attracted all the fellahs* of the neighbourhood. We had much difficulty to get through the crowd which collected round us to gratify their curiosity. We were even obliged to barricade a door leading into a kind of enclosure round the temple, to escape the importunity of these people.

The ancient Mamelukes, during their intestine dissensions, and their wars with the Porte and the viceroys of Egypt, had frequently taken refuge in this town, which, by its favourable position, and its distance from Cairo, secured their independence. They had embellished with a garden the place of their voluntary exile; we went there to enjoy the coolness of

* Cultivators or peasants.

the evening, and found ripe grapes of exquisite flavour. We but rarely meet with this fruit in Egypt, which, to judge from the pictures in the catacombs representing vintage scenes, must have been formerly cultivated there. Islamism without doubt first checked the cultivation of the vine, yet I do not think that in general the soil of Egypt is favourable to it; inundation and drought are equally fatal. It is at Esne too, that we find the best camels, which are bred by the Arabs of the tribe of Ababdeh and by them brought here for sale.

We next came to Eyleythia, where are the remains of three temples, the principal of which was dedicated to Bubasta, the Diana of the Egyptians. We still see traces of the ancient wall of the city, built of bricks dried in the sun, as well as very interesting grottoes.

At Edfou, the ancient Apollinopolis, we admired two magnificent pylones, belonging to a temple surrounded with a high wall. These

pylones, on which are sculptured gigantic bas-reliefs, are about seventy feet high, besides thirty feet buried in the sand. They are in such perfect preservation, that a stair-case made in the interior of the wall, the steps of which are very little damaged, still leads to the top, where there is a platform which appears to have served for astronomical observations. Since our departure from Egypt, Mr. Drovetti, in the course of his excavations, has discovered near this temple an avenue of Sphinxes. It is at present inhabited by thirty Arab families, whose misery seemed to be extreme. At our approach a multitude of women and children came as it were from under the ruins; some wretched huts built against the walls of this sumptuous edifice, adorned with a peristyle of columns, formed a very striking and painful contrast between the present state of this country and its past splendour. The Arabs call this place Athbah, which means destitute of trees, and indeed we did not

see many in the environs, except some tamarind and gum trees, neither of which require a very fertile soil.

On the other hand, the farther we advanced the more brilliant was the plumage of the inhabitants of the air. We saw many pelicans, flamingoes, white ibis, and a kind of small bird, of the most beautiful parroquet green, with two long feathers growing from the tips of the wings, like those of the bird of paradise.

Near Silsilis, we met with some quarries, where we still saw the traces of works begun by the ancients. We looked in vain on the walls of two small chapels hewn in the rock, for the figure of Pan or Mendes, described by Herodotus, and which the French *savans* thought they could distinguish. We found only the figure of Nephtis, who, as the wife of Typhon, or the evil genius, is represented with the body of a hog and the legs of a dog.

The temple of Ombos, which we afterwards

visited, and which is supposed to have been dedicated to Osiris and Typhon, appeared to us of a very ancient style. This superb monument was in a great measure destroyed by the current of the Nile, which, for some years past, has turned more directly towards the Arabic chain, and will in time destroy all the monuments on the left bank, unless dikes are raised, or canals dug, to give another direction to the stream.

We at length reached Assouan, or Syene, which, though we did not at that time suspect it, was to be the limit of our journey. Our vessel stopped at the foot of a hill, on which are still the ruins of an old monastery. As we intended to go as far as the second cataract, my husband lost no time in waiting on Mahomet Pacha, governor of Upper Egypt, to whom we had letters from the viceroy, to request him to facilitate our voyage. The tent of this Pacha was pitched not far from

the place where our vessel stopped; he was then engaged in inspecting the troops which were daily arriving, for the expedition to Dongola. He received my husband with much politeness, but would not consent to let us set out for the isle of Philœ, which was at that time occupied by numerous Albanian troops, who, being in want of boats, were obliged to remain several weeks in the vicinity. Not being able to answer for their discipline, and unwilling to take the responsibility upon himself, Mahomet Pacha persisted in his refusal, and we were consequently obliged, though with much regret, to renounce our voyage to the cataracts.

There still, however, remained some interesting objects, which delayed our departure for a few days. We began by visiting the charming Isle of Elephantina, covered with groves of palms, and a luxuriant vegetation. The complexion of the natives, after having

passed through all the gradations of colour, was, at Syene, of a black and chocolate hue. The women of Nubia do not veil themselves with the same strictness as the Egyptians. The young girls wear a small apron, with leather fringes, and adorned with shells. They are very ingenuous and simple in their manners; and any infraction on the established laws is punished by the father of the family with the utmost rigour.

The Nubians grease their hair in a very disagreeable manner; they use for this purpose oil obtained from the plant called Palma Christi, which they cultivate with much care, and which we found growing round all their huts; they then divide their hair into an infinite number of small tresses, so tightly braided that they generally last for their whole life. Hence we may easily judge of the neatness of the head-dress. Like the negresses, they have a taste for tinsel and glass beads. When we

landed on the island of Elephantina, the women and children flocked about us with a cordiality which we had not before met with: they eagerly brought us many little antiquities which they had found in the island, in exchange for which we gave them glass beads, knives, and small looking-glasses, for which they expressed their satisfaction by a thousand demonstrations of joy and gratitude.

The most perfect confidence was soon established between us; they chatted and laughed together, showing two rows of teeth as white as ivory. The figure of the young women appeared to me charming; their skin was as soft as satin, in spite of the burning sun to which they are constantly exposed. I believe that the oil with which they anoint their hair and part of their bodies, contributes to produce this effect. I had occasion to admire their courage; for I saw several of them cross the Nile sitting

astride upon the stem of a date tree, with an oar in their hands, without appearing to be afraid of the crocodiles; who, by seizing one of their legs, might easily have dragged them to the bottom. This mode of crossing the Nile is generally adopted in this country. When a tree is not to be had, they even use a bundle of stalks of Dourah; and I afterwards saw men and women navigating in this manner. The Isle of Elephantina contains the remains of two temples, which produce a very picturesque effect; especially one of them, which is situated on a little hill which overlooks the Nile. We then visited the famous Nilometer, which was discovered by the members of the French expedition.

On our return to Elephantina, my husband received a visit from Mahomet Pacha. There are certain forms of politeness which the Turks scrupulously observe. The Pacha is a very young man, above the middle size, and had

much amenity and affability in his manners. Coffee, and also a pipe were offered to him, which he accepted with apparent satisfaction. I withdrew with my femme-de-chambre during this interview, not wishing to violate the established customs. The politeness of the Turks, with respect to women, is very different from that of the Europeans; if they by chance meet one, be it even the wife of their nearest relation, they immediately turn their head aside not to see her; and what we should consider as a want of civility, or even as a mark of contempt, is among them a token of deference and respect.

The following day we went to visit the granite quarries, which are situated at a short distance from the town. It is a great extent of ground, which, with the exception of some sinuosities, presents to the eye only a mass of granite, which one would take for the nucleus of the earth. We distinctly recog-

nized the place from which the ancients had procured those immense obelisks which are found every where in Egypt. The question continually recurs, what means they can have employed to remove these enormous masses? If we may judge by a painting in the grotto of Ababdeh, which my husband copied, they made use of sledges; for in this design, we see a monolithe conveyed in this manner.

In the environs of Syene, they make beautiful baskets of rushes, and mats, which are used as carpets. It is an art which has attained a certain degree of perfection; but of which the Pacha has made a monopoly to the detriment of these poor people. We purchased several of these baskets, which closely resemble all those which have been found in the ancient tombs of Thebes. It must in general be admitted, that most of these branches of manufacture, which have been carried to some degree of perfection, are of ancient invention;

for the indolence of the present inhabitants of Egypt, and the defects of their government, do not permit them to make the least progress in the arts.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Departure from Syene.—Unpleasant meeting.—Altercation with the Reis.—The Kamsin.—Return to Cairo.

On the following day we left Syene, to return to Cairo. A favourable wind and the current of the river, made us advance with rapidity. This time we stopped but a few days at Thebes, and threw a glance for the last time, on this ancient queen of the world. We frequently met vessels with troops on board. The most active preparations were making for the great expedition to Dongola; which, as we learnt after our departure from Egypt, had been attended with complete success, by carrying the victorious arms of Ma-

homet Ali into the interior of those remote countries. These constant rencontres with an undisciplined soldiery, had nearly proved fatal to us; for one day, as I was walking on the bank, attended only by the Turkish officer, who accompanied us for our safety during the absence of my husband, who had gone up the country on a hunting party, I met two boats filled with Albanian and Arnaut soldiers, who were proceeding up the river. When they saw me, some of them immediately fired their guns, uttering insulting exclamations; but my guide having spoken to them in an authoritative manner, they contented themselves with this sally; and I continued my walk, without experiencing any farther inconvenience but the fright which they had occasioned me. From this time, however, I did not again venture to leave the boat, preferring a voluntary imprisonment, to exposing myself a second time to a similar rencontre.

Some days after, we were witness to another scene, which inspired me with no less terror than the one I have just described. The Reis of the vessel, whom I have already had occasion to mention as a person of a very suspicious character, having hired his bark to us for twelve hundred piastres a month, had received of my husband, on leaving Cairo, an advance of a thousand Egyptian piastres, on condition of taking on board a supply of provisions sufficient for the whole voyage. This contract was made in the presence of several witnesses; and the Reis, to confirm his promise, had even taken a formal oath to that effect. We had scarcely, however, arrived at Minieh, when he declared that he had no bread; and that we must stop several days in that place to purchase corn, and then to have it ground and made into bread. Notwithstanding this want of good faith, my husband contented himself with a slight reprimand, and the bread was purchased.

The Reis then assured us that he had sufficient provisions for the remainder of the voyage, and promised not to make any more delay; but it will soon appear how much confidence was to be placed in his word. A short time after, when we were near Keneh, just as a favourable wind had sprung up, we saw him cast anchor in the port of that town. Astonished at this proceeding, which did not at all agree with our plans, my husband asked him the reason; to which he replied, that not having received money enough at Cairo, it had been impossible to lay in the necessary provisions; and that if he would not consent to advance him a farther sum, he should be unable to continue the voyage.

My husband, incensed at such insolent knavery, immediately went to the Kiaschef of the village, and having informed him of the roguery of the Reis, that officer consented to do us justice, and to have him hanged on a

neighbouring tree. It may readily be supposed that this violent measure was rejected, which would not have accelerated our voyage. At length, after much debate, and after having ascertained that the Reis was really in want of money, because, having had some debts at Cairo, his creditors had seized upon the sum which my husband had advanced him before our departure, the latter consented to lend him a farther sum, on condition that he should not again delay our voyage.

The violent altercation which took place on this occasion, and the generosity of my husband, seemed, however, to have made some impression on the mind of the Reis, for every thing went on well for some time; but on our return, he began to seek various excuses for prolonging the voyage. Sometimes, the air was too calm; sometimes, he dreaded the approach of the Kamsin; till, at length, our patience being exhausted, my husband ordered

him, in an authoritative tone, to hoist the sails and to proceed on the voyage. The Turkish officer, though he possessed all the phlegm of his nation, seconded our just demand; the other gave an insolent reply. At length, from words they came to blows; and the Turk, the better to enforce his orders, raised his stick against the Reis.

The anger of this man, who was generally so mild, was the signal for a general attack; and all the Arabs in the vessel rushed at once upon the officer; threw him on the ground, pulled off his turban, and used him with extreme violence. One moment later, and these barbarians would have consummated their brutality by some act of sanguinary violence, had not my husband and Dr. Ricci, with pistols in their hands, interposed in time to prevent this dispute from coming to a fatal issue. Their interference, and the sight of their arms, had an instantaneous effect; for the Reis becoming sen-

sible of the imprudence of his conduct, in revolting against the orders of an officer of the Pacha, run away with several of his crew. He, however, returned in about a quarter of an hour, with a humble and repentant look, and the generosity of his adversary having interceded with my husband in his favour, order was re-established, and he prepared to obey.

We had scarcely set sail, when unfortunately the Kamsin, that burning and impetuous wind, which the Reis had previously announced to us, rose with much violence, and hurried on our boat in such a manner that it was in imminent danger of being dashed on the rocks which line the banks in this part. This wind is so formidable, that no boat dares to put out when it blows, and even the birds affrighted, retire to their securest retreats.

We proceeded with such rapidity, that we seemed to cut the air; the sky assumed a red and fiery tinge; the heavens began to be wholly

darkened; the air became hot and suffocating; a cloud of burning sand blown from the bank stopped our breath, and obliged us to close our eyes and nostrils. Notwithstanding these alarming symptoms and our desire of putting to shore, we were unable to succeed in stopping the vessel, which the wind drove forward with inconceivable swiftness. Passing with the rapidity of lightning we saw another boat, which had been just thrown upon a sand bank, and was in a sinking state; but it was decreed that we should escape as by a miracle this imminent danger; for soon after we landed at Boulak. This wind had so greatly accelerated our voyage, that we found ourselves at the end of our course without suspecting it: we had thus made in two days a voyage which had cost us three weeks after our departure from Cairo, as I have before stated.

We arrived at Cairo at the end of February, after an absence of two months and a half.

We passed here the month of March, and part of April, and every thing being ready for our departure we left this city on the 18th of April, and embarked for the second time at Boulak to repair to Damietta and thence into Syria and Palestine. My readers will see in the sequel the obstacles that opposed the execution of this plan.

CHAPTER XIX.

Arrival at Damietta.—Appearance of that City.—Mr. Basil Faker.—His house.—Mrs. Faker.

Our voyage from Cairo to Damietta was extremely agreeable, the Delta being one of the most pleasant, fertile, and best cultivated parts of Egypt. Sometimes towards evening we went on shore, to take a walk in the environs. A rich plain and the most beautiful vegetation presented themselves to our view; groves of citrons, palms, and sycamores, overshadowed the bank, and afforded delightful coolness. I frequently enjoyed myself in walking or reposing under some sycamore, the thick and knotted trunk of which proved its venerable

age, while my husband with a gun in his hand terrified thousands of turtle doves, which had their retreat in these secluded spots. Here I indulged in the reveries inspired by the climate and by a scenery so new to me. I admired the purity of the azure firmament, I inhaled with delight the perfume of a thousand odoriferous flowers, and it was not till warned of the approach of night by the cool breeze which preceded it, that I returned slowly and with regret to our vessel. Sometimes too, the places through which we passed awakened historical recollections, which, like the shades of Ossian, hovered round the ruins and tombs which we trod under foot.

Pens more learned than mine have enumerated the ancient cities which stood upon the banks by which we sailed, and which, like the ruins of Atribis,* present nothing to the eye

* Atribis, according to Herodotus, contained a temple dedicated to Athor, goddess of night, whom the Greeks often confound with Aphrodite.

of the traveller but heaps of rubbish, and some fallen columns. I took pleasure in recollections of a more modern date; I mean that epoch when the religious and warlike enthusiasm of all Europe, directed by the policy of some priests, impelled into the burning deserts of Africa and Syria a multitude of brave men, who there met death around their monarch, the pious Louis IX., who preserved his dignity even in chains. It was at Mansourah, a place by which we passed, that the king was made prisoner after a battle, the loss of which is attributed to the intrepid but rash attack of the Templars. Religion, and the remembrance of an adored wife, might alleviate the reverses of this unfortunate prince; for this heroic and virtuous princess, who had taken the cross not to be separated from her august consort, preferring death to ignominy, had the courage to desire one of her knights to take away her life rather than suffer her to fall into

the hands of the enemy. Heaven, however, was pleased to preserve so much virtue and courage; she was taken prisoner near the ancient Damietta, but on the most honourable conditions; and, during the whole period of her captivity, was treated with the respect due to her rank and her personal qualities.

After a voyage of eight days we arrived at Damietta. I was informed that we should immediately land opposite the house of Mr. Basil Faker, consular agent to six different powers, and who had generously offered us his house during our stay in that city.

While my husband and Mr. Drovetti, who had accompanied us in this voyage, were preparing to inform our host of our arrival, I spent a few moments at my toilette; this is a custom from which women do not readily depart, and in a country where it forms the only, or at least the principal, occupation of their life, this care was not quite superfluous on my part.

I was going, in my turn, to quit the boat, when a kind of deputation, at the head of which was the dragoman of the consulate, came to offer me some vases, filled with the most beautiful flowers. This politeness was the more agreeable to me, as I had not seen so many since my stay in Egypt, where, in general, very few are cultivated. The mildness of the climate contributes much to increase the natural indolence of the natives; and the Arabs, confining themselves in the cultivation of the soil, to the labour which is strictly necessary for their subsistence, willingly renounce every thing which is merely an object of luxury and amusement.

On leaving the boat, I was agreeably surprised with the most pleasing and diversified prospect. The city of Damietta is built on the right bank of the river; and its first appearance reminded me of some of the quarters of Venice; the houses, looking all on this side

towards the Nile, and towards the country, with their balconies, terraces, and pavilions, have not such a dull monotonous effect as most of the houses in the East, which, when seen from the street, resemble, with their flat roofs, and their want of windows, merely a garden wall. Every house at Damietta has its own little port, to facilitate the approach of vessels of all kinds: for the trade of this city in coffee, rice, beans, and linens, is very brisk, and extends into Syria, and all parts of the Levant. Numerous boats and gondolas, called canges, elegantly decorated, were sailing up and down the river: and not to leave this moving picture without some contrast to give it additional interest, groups of Turks were gravely seated before each of the houses, cross-legged, on rich carpets, smoking their long pipes, with the most unalterable composure.

I quitted the boat, followed by my suite, and entered a vast saloon, on the ground floor, paved

with bricks, and ornamented in the Byzantine fashion. It was very lofty, and had no other covering but a lattice, over which an enormous vine spread its branches and thick foliage: happy climate where such a roof is a sufficient shelter from the inclemency of the air! I passed between two rows of servants and slaves, who were in an attitude of the most profound respect: but I soon observed that these marks of deference were less intended for me than for the master of the house, who, seeing me enter, rose and came to meet me.

He was about fifty years of age, of a dignified figure and grave deportment; he wore the oriental dress, that is, an ample silk robe, a turban, and a cachemere sash. Notwithstanding the politeness and urbanity of his manners, and my knowledge of the world, I could not help experiencing a degree of restraint and embarrassment in his presence. Women are so accustomed in Europe to the attention, and even respect and

admiration of men, that a more cold and reserved reception easily makes them apprehend that their presence is not agreeable. This, however, was not the case with Mr. Basil Faker, for I had in the sequel occasion to remark, that this formal gravity always prevails in the East at visits received and paid, even in the circle of their nearest relations.

Mr. Basil Faker is a native of the Levant, and professing the Greek religion; he is a man of learning and acknowledged merit, and has even translated into Italian several of the most esteemed Arabian authors. After the usual compliments, he conducted me to a cabinet adjoining a saloon, elegantly hung with draperies of Indian muslin, and the floor covered with a Persian carpet, and surrounded with a broad and very low divan, in the Eastern fashion, the only kind of furniture in the apartment. All the servants followed us hither, and ranged themselves in two rows before their master, their

eyes fixed on his person, and ready to obey the slightest indication of his will.

After resting a few moments I was invited to go into the apartment prepared for me. It was a kind of pavilion, separated by a garden from the main dwelling, destined for the residence of the secreturies and men servants, and likewise for the levies and private audiences of the consul. I passed under an arbour of honeysuckle and jassamine, which extended from one end of the garden to the other, and I saw the whole brilliant and varied kingdom of Flora, blooming around me, which the goddess herself seemed to have taken pleasure in cultivating. It was truly an enchanting spot, shaded with myrtles, enormous rose laurels, fig-trees, orange-trees in full blossom, gum-trees, the delicate leaf of which resembles the gleditsia of our gardens, the flower of which emits an agreeable perfume. I then surveyed the building that I was about

to enter, and which Mr. Faker had lately had built in the European fashion. The many grated windows, gave it, externally, the appearance of an enormous bird cage. The interior, however, corresponded to the models which it was intended to follow, and, with the exception of a very narrow staircase, where two persons could hardly walk abreast, the whole was perfectly well arranged. A long gallery, open towards the country, like the farm houses in the canton of Berne, united the two wings of the building. How often have I admired from this gallery the magnificent sight of the setting sun, which, after shedding a flood of light on the earth, disappeared at last behind a grove of palms, gilding the horizon and the summits of the trees with a thousand rays.

I was agreeably surprised on entering my room, to find it properly furnished, even with tables and chairs, which are very uncommon in

this country. There were a great many windows, being in two rows, one above another, and I counted eighteen of them.

I was soon after informed that Mrs. Faker requested permission to pay me a visit; and I was preparing to anticipate her, when I was told that I should transgress the received usages by not waiting for her in my own apartment. The Eastern fashion of paying the first visit to strangers, has, in my idea, something kind and hospitable about it, which recals the happy times of the patriarchal age, when every stranger was welcomed as a friend and a brother.* When she was assured that I was alone, for

* This custom has, besides, a real advantage to the natives, because it allows them the liberty of making a choice of the strangers whom they think fit to admit among their acquaintance, a necessary precaution in a country where the respectable inhabitants cannot be too circumspect in their intercourse with the multitude of adventurers and swindlers who, not having succeeded in Europe, go to Egypt to repair what they call the wrongs of fortune.

Mrs. Faker did not appear in my husband's presence till a future time, she entered, followed by five or six other ladies. Though this pompous entrance might have reminded me of the goddess Calypso, surrounded by her nymphs, the ugliness of her attendants would not permit my imagination to take this poetical flight. When they had all seated themselves, I ventured on a few words of conversation, but, unfortunately, not one of the ladies understood a word of Italian, and the progress which I had made in the Arabic language, did not go much beyond *sabalcher*, and *salamat*.* We were therefore reduced to the necessity of conversing by signs; we commenced by surveying one another with reciprocal curiosity, and analyzing, in the true female spirit, the arrangement of our toilette. That of my hostess exceeded in richness and magnificence all that I had ever seen. Her petticoat was of a rich India tissue, striped with

* Good day, and the usual salutation.

gold; her ample robe of green velvet, beautifully embroidered with gold; this work had been done at Constantinople, as she gave me to understand; it was open in the front and displayed her petticoat and her muslin pantaloons, likewise wrought with gold, falling over a small foot which had no covering but only a gold ring round the instep. She did not wear a chemise, and her neck was covered with a gauze so transparent as to show the whole of the contour.

So far all was well; but as to her head, it was impossible to look at it without fearing that she would sink under the weight of her grotesque head-dress. She had loaded her turban with muslin bands of all colours and an enormous quantity of flowers, diamonds, and tinsel ornaments, which gave her the appearance of an itinerant *magasin de modes*. A long veil of India muslin, strewn with spangles, was also fastened above all these, and concealed remarkably small tresses

of hair and black silk which hung down behind as low as her waist, and to which were attached a quantity of small gold coins, which, at the least motion of her head, produced a jingle like the bells of our horses. She was below the middle size, and had the *embonpoint* so much esteemed in the East. Her complexion had retained its clearness; but she heightened her charms by a thick coat of rouge on her cheeks, a black stripe on her eyebrows and eyelids, and an orange tinge on her nails and the palms of her hands, and on the soles and nails of her feet. The women in the East make great use of this colour, which is obtained from a tree called henné.

Mrs. Faker is a native of Syria; her features, which may be called regular, indicated the goodness of her heart, and that calm happiness which arises from the want of the developement of the intellectual faculties. When she wished to give expression to her countenance, she rolled her

eyes backwards and forwards with inconceivable rapidity; it is an art which young women in the East are taught to practise, and I was assured that the men consider it as particularly pleasing. As for the women who accompanied her, they were the wife of the dragoman, a native of Constantinople, and some Turkish and Arabian females, attached to her service.

It is a very general custom in the East for the mistress of the house to live on an extremely familiar footing with her domestics: I was not a little surprised on hearing that Mrs. Faker had admitted my *femme de chambre* to her table, while ceremony and etiquette reigned at that of her husband, where I was the only female who was admitted, because I was a foreigner. The company at this table was pretty numerous, consisting of the secretaries, the physician, the dragoman, and some relations of the master of the house, as well as of strangers, who frequently came upon business, Mr. Faker having a large commercial establishment.

A circumstance which appeared to me very singular, and still more repugnant to my feelings, was to see a man of venerable appearance, a near relation of Mrs. Faker, waiting at table upon her husband with every mark of profound respect. In the East, all homage is reserved for the head of the family; the deference shown him is carried to such an excess, that his sisters and even his wife dare not sit down in his presence; in short, the master of the house is a kind of petty sovereign, who decides very despotically on the interest and liberty of the individuals, attached to him by the bonds of consanguinity. What I found the most humiliating to my sex, was to see even mothers forgetting all the dignity of their character, pay respectful homage to their sons, rise in their presence, and eagerly wait upon them like slaves. These revolting abuses, which prove the usurpations of the stronger sex over the weaker, are an effect of Islamism, the influence of which will never be felt by our European women.

CHAPTER XX.

The dragoman of Mr. Faker.—Hydraulic machine.—Burying grounds of Egypt.—The papyrus.—Danger to which we were exposed.—Female dancers.

BEING desirous of revisiting the pretty parterre, which had enchanted me on my arrival, I went towards evening into the garden; I here found the dragoman of the consulate, who, though a Christian, to my great surprise wore a green robe; the descendants of Mahomet and his followers enjoy exclusively the privilege of wearing this colour, and the green turban, especially, is a distinguishing mark of rights and prerogatives.

Under the present governor Mussulman fanaticism has lost much of its rigour, both with

respect to the customs and to the laws; and Christians enjoy in Egypt not only perfect security, but even a degree of respect, of which they are deprived wherever the crescent prevails. Perhaps the dragoman, availing himself of this liberty, wished to satisfy his prevailing taste for a colour, which, like a forbidden fruit, appeared doubly charming in his eyes. Like his wife he was a native of Constantinople; he related to me with extreme volubility the history of his life, or rather of his adventures, for he had already run through all the chances of fortune. During this conversation the bostandgi, or gardener, approached us; he was a good natured jolly old man, who, speaking only Turkish, offered me a nosegay, to which I might have replied, if I had been a little better acquainted with the floral language still in use in the East.

Thus terminated the events of this day, which were to be repeated more frequently than we had at first expected; for the Greek

revolution having broken out during our stay at Damietta, we were obliged to remain in this city, and give up our intention of visiting Syria and Palestine.

I was awakened the following morning by a sharp and disagreeable noise. I ran to the window, and saw one of those hydraulic machines, used for watering the rice fields, of which there are a great many at Damietta, and which, during the months of May, June, and July, render the air very unhealthy in this city.

The contrivance of this machine, called Sakie, is very simple; it is a wheel, to which several vessels are fastened, which take up the water and empty it into a trough; the wheel is put in motion by mules. I inquired what might have been the cause of the hissing which I had heard part of the night, and which had waked me several times. I was told that this hissing doubtless proceeded from serpents, which during the night quit their retreats to seek for

warmer places; it was added, that they often go into the houses, but that they did no harm, and that I need not be afraid if I found one by chance in my room. I own I felt a hearty dislike to this unhappy taste for windows, which never fitting close afforded an easy access to these unwelcome guests. From this time I never retired to rest without having previously searched every corner of the room, and frequently during the night, I involuntarily shuddered on hearing this inharmonious music.

The heat being excessive we always rose early to enjoy the coolness of the morning, and to take a walk in the environs.

We very often passed by the burying-ground, situated at some distance from the city. Small brick tombs, instead of a mound of earth, indicate the place of sepulture. I frequently saw women and old men sitting on these tombs in profound meditation. It seems, that the present inhabitants have inherited from the

ancient Egyptians their veneration for the dead. Though they no longer embalm them, as formerly, nor dig catacombs to deposit them, I have seen stone tombs in the poorest villages, the houses of which were built of clay.* Diodorus says, that the ancient Egyptians displayed more magnificence and wealth in their tombs than in their dwellings; alleging, as a reason, that the houses of the living were only inns or resting places; whereas, the tombs are stable and eternal mansions. We see from this, that the idea of comparing life to a journey is very ancient. The innate indolence of the Arabs of our day, is, however, superior to their respect for the dead; for we more than once saw at Cairo, a body recently

* Most of the houses in the villages of Upper Egypt, are built only of earth, mixed with mud of the Nile. This earth, when dried in the sun, acquires great solidity. These dwellings have generally only one opening, which serves at once for a door and a window, and are thus nearly destitute of all the comforts of life.

disinterred by troops of wild dogs and half devoured.

As the laws of the police respecting interments are not observed with the same strictness as among us, such acts of negligence frequently occur; particularly, in a city so populous as Cairo, and inhabited by so many different sects. The tombs of saints, which are distinguished from others by their structure, are very numerous. It is, I believe, pretty easy to become a saint in Egypt, and to be thought worthy of a mausoleum, and a religious veneration which extends even beyond the tomb. The Santons generally attain this honour. They are Cenobites, living in some grottoes or catacombs, who wear little or no clothing, and seldom quit their retreats; but whenever they show themselves to the multitude, every body crowds round them; the women in particular think themselves honoured

by their notice, and fancy that it makes them participate in their moral sanctity.

It was in one of our morning walks, that we met with the papyrus plant, which the ancients used for the manufacture of paper. It is a kind of three-cornered reed, which is now to be found in no other part of Egypt than the environs of Damietta, and the banks of Lake Menzaleh. The scarcity of this plant appears less strange, when we recollect what Strabo says on the subject of the papyrus, that the government, to secure a monopoly, caused it to be pulled up in a great part of Egypt, and suffered it only in some appointed districts, where its cultivation, and the use made of it, could be superintended. Pliny says but a few words respecting the manner of employing and preparing it.

According to this author, the membranes of the plant were glued together, in such a manner, as to render the places where they

were joined imperceptible. It were to be wished, that he had entered into a more detailed description on this interesting subject. Perhaps the ancients prepared the papyrus by pressing it, as is still done by the South-sea Islanders, with their stuffs, which they also manufacture of the membranes of various plants; and which, in part, bear a great analogy to the papyrus of the ancients: we still find on the latter indubitable traces of this process. Several papyri, in my husband's collection, which are now in the Museum at Berlin, have still such a degree of solidity, that twenty centuries have not been able to impair it; and they may still be unrolled, with the same facility as any other roll of paper or parchment. They are of a yellow or brown colour, according as they have been more or less exposed to the air. My husband is, himself, still in possession of one, the symbolical and hieroglyphical figures on which

are painted in very lively and various colours, in perfect preservation. A peculiarity which I have had occasion to remark is, that the two ends of the papyrus are hermetically closed with a stopper of byssus, covered with resin, which has so wonderfully preserved them from the influence of the air. The manufacture and exportation of the papyrus, formed a considerable branch of commerce among the ancient Egyptians. Mr. Reynier says, that this plant was made use of in the manufactory of paper, as late as the ninth century.

Mr. Drovetti, my husband, and myself, sometimes extended our promenades to the distance of one or two leagues from the city. I continued to wear my European dress without having been insulted by the detachments of Albanian and Arnaut soldiers, whom we continually met with; it is true that the gentlemen always kept close to me, and protected me. In these walks we were not accompanied

by Janizaries, as we had been at Cairo, and during our tour in Upper Egypt, where the Pacha, as I have already said, had given us one of his own officers for our security. When an uncertain report of the Greek insurrection was spread in Damietta, the troops began to manifest hostile intentions towards the Christians; and, during one of our walks, we heard two pistols fired close to us, and saw at the same instant some balls fall at our feet. The intention was evident; the Albanian, who had wished to give us a specimen of his address, vexed at having missed his aim, came from behind a hedge, where he had been posted: and we judged it prudent to abridge our walk. This adventure having transpired, by what means we were ignorant, the Aga, who commanded the city, and to whom we had been recommended by the Pacha, offered to give us speedy and sanguinary satisfaction; but we declined, as may well be supposed, this act of

severity, which would only have irritated the peoples' mind against us.

Mrs. Faker, who, with her women, occupied the second floor of the house, one day invited me to come and see her. I met there a numerous assemblage of Turkish and Arabian ladies, who, on seeing me enter, pressed round with a childish curiosity. I sat down upon the ground, on a carpet, by the side of them, and soon saw what their intention was; it was as much to exhibit me, as to make me admire a dance, executed in this country only by a privileged caste of females, called gavanaki in Egypt, and halme among the Turks, and who, like the bayadares in India, enjoy perfect liberty, and support themselves by the public exhibition of their talents. These women, who are frequently sent for to the harems, to instruct the young girls in agreeable arts, besides their skill in dancing, are likewise versed

in music and singing,* and are the delight of the ladies of the East.†

The *ennui* and insipid monotony of a harem, the total want of education of the women who are confined in it, and the extreme idleness which is the result of it, can alone make them take pleasure in a sight destitute of taste and sense, which offends modesty, and

* They then take the name of moganie.

† Those who only sing are called halme, in the plural, halvalem. They enjoy a better reputation, and are more esteemed than the dancers. During our stay at Cairo, there was a famous singer, whom the Europeans never called by any other name than that of the Arabian Catalani. The price which she required for her performance was worthy of the name which she had assumed; to induce her to sing, it was necessary to begin by sending her a Cachemere shawl worth a hundred Spanish piastres; when the concert was ended, she laid the whole company under contribution; and a present of small value did not always suffice, for she had the art of stimulating the self-love of the audience by proclaiming aloud the value of each present which she received.

frightens away the graces. The principal talent of these dancers consists not in nimbleness of the feet, in the lightness and equilibrium of the body, and in the gracefulness of the attitudes and motions, but in an extreme mobility of the hips. Their dance is a kind of lascivious pantomime; for the expression of their countenances accompanied all their movements. The dancer, who was pointed out to my admiration, and who excited the loudest acclamations of all the spectators, held castanets in her hand, singing, and at intervals accompanying herself with a three-stringed instrument, resembling a Spanish mandoline. Fatigued with this scene, and stunned by the noise around me, I slipped out, at the hazard of being accused, by the ladies, of want of taste, or of too much sensibility.

CHAPTER XXI.

Visit to two Harems.—State of the Women in the East.

When at Cairo,* I had been several times solicited to visit the harem of the Pacha,* a favour which is generally not granted to strangers. It is customary in the East to make reciprocal presents in such interviews. Not being able to procure in this city any productions of Europe worthy of being offered to these fair odalisques of such high rank, I was for a long time obliged to restrain my curiosity, and renounce this visit.

* The present Pacha, Mahomet Ali, has two legitimate wives, one of whom resides at Cairo, and the other at Alexandria. The number of his concubines is immense: there are above two hundred in his harem at Alexandria.

At Damietta, however, where a fresh occasion presented itself of visiting the harem of the Aga, governor of the province, and where I should not be obliged to present such magnificent gifts, I resolved to make myself acquainted with an abode which contained so many things contrary to the taste, the ideas, and manners of Europe. The harem of the Aga was situated nearly opposite to the residence of Mr. Faker, on the other bank of the Nile, in a garden, in the Turkish style, that is to say, a piece of ground without trees. I was accompanied by the lady of the Portuguese physician, who understood a little Italian and Arabic, and who was to act as my interpreter. When we arrived at the entrance of the building, we were received by a black eunuch, richly dressed, who invited us to go into a very cool apartment, with latticed windows, and no furniture except a very broad and low divan. He left us to announce us to his mistress: we soon

after saw the two wives of the Aga, accompanied by two of his daughters, one of whom was yet a child, and the other married to one of the superior officers in the army, and about twenty young slaves. The two ladies, as well as the daughters of the Aga, seated themselves next to me, while the slaves ranged themselves in a half circle before us, with their arms crossed on the breast, and preserving a respectful silence. As all these women spoke only Turkish, we needed a second interpreter, who, in her turn, understood only Turkish and Arabic, so that what I said in Italian had to be translated into Arabic, and the Arabic into Turkish; thus, to understand each other, we had need of three languages, and two interpreters.

It may readily be supposed that the conversation could not go on fluently, as we depended on the good will and talents of our interpreters: in fact, the *qui pro quo* resulting from the bad translations of our questions and answers were

truly comic, and excited so much gaiety that loud and repeated bursts of laughter soon established a good understanding between us. The oldest of the consorts of the Aga, however, maintained a dignified gravity, while the other, who was much younger, and of an animated and interesting countenance, repeated, with extreme volubility, the most insignificant questions, and did not fail to examine the whole arrangement of my toilette. They asked me many questions respecting the women in my country: as for Europe, I believe, they entertained very vague notions of it, and when I told them that our husbands had but one wife and no slaves, they looked at one another, undetermined whether to applaud or laugh at this custom.

The eldest daughter of the Aga was a young person of the most beautiful and pleasing countenance. She did not enjoy good health; her extreme paleness rendered her really interesting in my eyes: she resembled a lily lan-

guishing, and withered by the burning wind of the desert. She appeared to cherish life from the idea that I, perhaps, possessed the skill to cure her, and earnestly intreated me to prescribe some remedy.

There is something singular in the conviction generally entertained by the Orientals, that all Europeans, without distinction, have a knowledge of medicine and necromancy, arts commonly confounded with one another. It several times happened to us in Upper Egypt, to be called to the assistance of persons actually dying, or in so desperate a state that nothing less than a conjuror would have been required to preserve their lives. Without being a distinguished disciple of Hippocrates, it is easy to acquire the reputation of an able physician; and the really skilful medical man who accompanied us during our tour in Upper Egypt, was accustomed, on such occasions, that is, when the case was not desperate, in imitation of the

celebrated Sangrado, of happy memory, to administer only the most simple remedies, which never failed to produce a prompt and marvellous effect. So much influence has the imagination of these children of nature on their cure.* But to return to my fair odalisques.

They were nearly all natives of Syria, Circassia, and Georgia, and I had thus leisure to survey these beauties who enjoy so much celebrity. They undoubtedly merit their reputation; I can, however, tell my fair countrywomen, to comfort them, and to do justice to truth, that Europe certainly can boast of beauties equal to those of the East. Those whom I had now the pleasure of seeing, had the most agreeable countenances, and delicate

* To work a miracle, it is often quite sufficient to write some words on a piece of paper, or draw some cabalistic figure, which they swallow, or place as a talisman on the part affected.

and regular features: but what most attracted my admiration was their hair, which fell in waving and natural curls down to their waist. They had each preserved their national costume, which agreeably varied this pretty parterre; nor had they adopted the tresses of the Egyptian women, which rather disfigure than improve the figure. They had exquisitely beautiful teeth, but the clearness and bloom of youth were banished from their complexion; they all had a languid air, and I did not find among them that *embonpoint* which I had expected to meet. Perhaps their sedentary mode of life, and the destructive climate of Egypt, have contributed to tarnish the lustre of their charms. The climate of Egypt, otherwise so salubrious, exercises a malignant influence upon female beauty, and on the children of European parents. It is rare to see foreign families preserve theirs; they generally die at an early age; and this, too, is one of the causes why the Mame-

lukes of Egypt never have any posterity, but are always recruited by the purchase of young boys, generally brought from Circassia and the provinces bordering on the Black Sea, and the Ural Mountains.

The mortality of children in Egypt is excessive; it is chiefly caused by that unhappy fatalism which prevents the natives from providing against the diseases to which that age is subject. The small-pox alone carries off one-third of the children; the Pacha notwithstanding all his endeavours to introduce vaccination, has been able to attain his object but imperfectly; and if we add to the ravages of the small-pox, those of the plague and malignant fevers, we shall see reason to wonder that this fertile country is not entirely changed into a desert. Cairo, in the times of the Caliphs, still had a population of nearly one million, which is now reduced to about one-third. It is melancholy to see how all the

measures of an enlightened government are constantly counteracted in Egypt by the religious and fanatic ideas of the inhabitants. However, the Pacha has already made gigantic strides; and if his successors should be wise enough to proceed in the same course, this fertile land would doubtless afford in future ages the appearance of a new creation.

Refreshments were brought in on a small table of cedar, very low, and ornamented with a pretty Mosaic of ivory and mother-of-pearl; the collation consisted of confectionary, cakes made of honey and fruits, and sherbet. Meantime, some slaves burnt incense in silver censers, and frequently sprinkled us with rose water; two others placed themselves at my side; and every time that I either ate or drank any thing, were ready to hold under my lips a napkin of a coarse quality, yet embroidered with gold. Others, provided with fans, drove away the swarms of insects which the pastry and

fruit had attracted around us. In short, each seemed to have a particular function to perform. When the repast was ended, they wished me to pass the night with them and to take the bath; but having already acquainted myself with this kind of amusement at Cairo, I declined their polite invitation. After going over the house, which did not contain any thing remarkable, I took my leave; and on departing, distributed among the slaves some small gold coins, to which they attach a great value.

Some days after, Mr. Faker came to us, and proposed to introduce us to the first Ulema of the city, a person of very high rank; who having heard of our visit to the Aga, was desirous that we should confer the same honour on him. We set out in a gondola; for his harem and country-house were situated on a small island formed by the Nile, at some distance from the city. He received us himself

on landing, and I was struck with the venerable appearance of this old man; who reminded me of the celebrated picture of Abraham and Agar, by Guercino, in the Milan collection. The silver beard which swept his breast, his dignified looks, and even his turban, and the rich drapery of his robe, recalled to my mind the Patriarch of Israel, so well delineated by the immortal pencil of this artist. He led us into a small kiosk, washed by the waters of the Nile, and surrounded by a delightful gallery, from which we enjoyed a rich prospect, diversified with palms and banians, and animated with numerous droves of buffaloes and camels. Contemplating this scene, I fancied myself transported forty centuries back, and saw in imagination the pious Patriarch, directed by the voice of the Almighty, traversing these plains, and imploring the hospitality of the Pharaohs.

If we reflect that the Mussulmen have never

any opportunities of being in the company of a woman not belonging to their own family; and that the law of their Prophet makes them consider our sex as destitute of a soul, and unworthy to enjoy the same prerogatives as the men, we shall wonder at the superior mind of this Ulema, who, in spite of the prejudices of his caste and of his religion, received a foreign female with attention, and even granted her the honour of being seated by his side. Our venerable host, therefore, in every respect merited the title of a philosopher, unless a little curiosity, which philosophers have in common with other mortals, was concerned in it. Pipes having been presented to every body, an attention which the Orientals never fail to observe, I expressed a desire to visit the abode of his women; and attended by a slave, I repaired to the house in which they resided. On my entrance, they all crowded around me with expressions of

noisy gaiety; they were like a troop of young foals liberated from the rein. I am not aware whether they had been informed of my visit; not having an interpreter, it was impossible for me to converse with them. There were in this harem none but Arab or Egyptian women, and some Negro slaves; they did not appear to be near so well bred as the women of the Aga; and their indelicate style of dress forced me to avert my eyes. They tormented me with their curiosity about my toilette; and their importunity became so troublesome, that, wearied with their noise, of which I comprehended nothing, and dreading the fate of the cock stripped of his feathers, in the fable, I resolved to escape, notwithstanding their efforts to detain me, glad to be free from them, and to return to the protection of my husband.

This was my last visit to a harem; it may perhaps be agreeable to say a few words on the general state of the women in Egypt. All

that I have been able to learn by personal observation, and what I was told by several Levantine ladies, concurs to prove that the situation of the women in the East is not so unhappy as we generally fancy it to be. The different races and sects, of which the present population of Egypt is composed,* have, it is true, this in common, that they shut up their women; and the Cophts, though Christians, observe this custom with much more rigour than even the Arabs themselves; but this privation of liberty is only imaginary, and extends no farther than to prohibit them from

* The present inhabitants of Egypt are a mixture of *Cophts*, who are generally considered as the descendants of the ancient Egyptians; they embraced Christianity during the first centuries, when this religion was spread in Egypt, but their rites differ from those of the Roman Catholics; of *Arabs*, who conquered this country; of *Greeks* and *Armenians*, both of whom have a different kind of worship; of the *Levantines*, who are Roman Catholics; of *Jews*; and, lastly, of *Turks*, who are its present masters.

appearing in public without a veil, which is a kind of cloak of black silk, which hides their form and their face in a frightful manner, and to exclude them from the society of the men. They are, notwithstanding, perfect mistresses at home, and exclusively command the slaves in their own service, who, in spite of the favours of their master, are no less dependent on the wife than on the latter. As their dwelling is always separated from that of their husband, they have a right to prevent him from entering it, by placing before the door a pair of slippers, which is a sign that they have company. The husband, who dares not appear in the presence of another person's wife, is obliged to respect this indication; and the German proverb, which says, "that a man is under his wife's slipper," may be perfectly applicable in the East. When they wish to visit any of their friends or relations, the

husband has not the right of opposing them; and, attended by a faithful slave, they sometimes absent themselves from home for several weeks together.

Under the pretext of these visits, I was assured that they allow themselves incredible liberty; in spite of their veils, and the locks under which they are shut up, they find means to indemnify themselves for this constraint; and it is here that we most see the truth of that maxim, which says: "That virtue protects itself, and that good principles are the best dowry of a female."

The men, in their turn, when they are tired of their wives, sometimes have recourse to poison to rid themselves of them; but instances of this kind are rare, and under the present government we hear no more of such horrors.

Education is so much neglected, that the

females are not instructed even in the elements of the most simple things, so that their minds being uncultivated, they are strangers to a number of enjoyments, the want of which would appear to them insupportable, if their information were more extensive. It must also be allowed, that education, by developing our intellectual faculties, by increasing our delicacy and sensibility, renders us susceptible of numerous trifling sufferings, which are not felt by the unenlightened children of nature. Thus we see that the system of compensation, that wise and equitable distribution of pains and enjoyments, of faculties and resources, which balance and equalize all conditions of life, also takes place in favour of the women of the East, who, but for this divine justice, would have too much reason to complain of the abuse of power in the other sex, and of the iniquity of a religion, which condemns them to a kind

of moral and political nullity. Those whom their fortune dispenses from the cares of domestic economy, leave them to slaves, and pass their lives stretched at ease upon a divan, in the *dolce far niente* of the Italians.

CHAPTER XXII.

Departure from Damietta.—Arrival in the Roads of Aboukir.—Bad News.—Second Stay at Alexandria.

On leaving Cairo, we had it in contemplation to go from Damietta to Palestine, to visit those sacred places which always inspire Christians of every denomination with the most lively interest, and thence to visit a part of Syria and Mount Lebanon. We had just hired for this purpose a vessel which was to convey us to Jaffa; and on leaving that town I was to proceed to Jerusalem in a palanquin, not being able to go on horseback. Every thing was ready for our departure, even our luggage was on board, when an event, which till

then had been only dubiously reported, rendered the execution of this project impossible. It was the positive news of troubles having broken out in Syria, in consequence of the insurrection of the Greeks, which Mr. Faker had just received, and immediately communicated to us. It was easy to be foreseen, that this conflagration would not speedily be extinguished, and that, in the end, it would spread through the whole of the Levant, particularly as the Druses, a warlike and restless people, seemed inclined to join the cause of the Greeks. Several European travellers had already been insulted on the road to Jerusalem; prudence, therefore, obliged us to renounce this journey, from which we had promised ourselves so many pleasures and agreeable recollections.

Under these circumstances we had only to think of returning to Europe. Unwilling to go to Alexandria, which was at that time dreadfully affected by the plague, my hus-

band despatched a courier with orders to send from the port of that city one of the corvettes of the Pacha, called La Bella Svezia, which he had hired for 4,000 Spanish piastres, and which was to convey us to Europe, with the antiquities, and Arabian horses which we had purchased. This large vessel not being able to come quite up to Damietta, it was determined that it should wait for us in the roads of Aboukir, and that we should go out of the bogaze* in a djerme.† We had still to wait several days for a favourable wind before we could effect our purpose: as soon as the wind

* A name given to the passage between the sand bank which obstructs the mouth of this arm of the Nile, and which renders navigation dangerous, and often impracticable; vessels are sometimes obliged to wait several months in the road, and in the port of Damietta, before they are able to enter or go out. One of the most favourable times for crossing the sand bank is when the inundation of the Nile covers it to the depth of eight or twelve feet.

† A boat used for the conveyance of grain.

rises, and the passage is free, a signal is immediately given in the port, which is repeated on one of the minarets of the city. We were accordingly informed by the captain on duty; and every thing being ready for our departure, we directly proceeded in a gondola to the fort of Esbe, where our djerme was ready for us. It was here that we took leave of our worthy host and several of his friends who had accompanied us, and mounting our frail bark, which was constantly tossed by the waves of the Nile, which the wind swelled more and more, we commended ourselves to the protection of the Almighty, and to the boasted, but dubious, skill of our rowers.

This vessel, the best that we had been able to procure, was in so bad a condition, and so small, that we lay at the bottom of the hold close together, without being able to stir. An attempt had been made to cover this wretched bark by some carpets and blankets, hung up

and fastened to the mast; and we soon had reason to congratulate ourselves on this precaution; for the high wind which arose at the moment of our departure, and impelled us with incredible rapidity, changed into a complete hurricane, the violence of which soon baffled all our precaution. When we reached the open sea, our boat became entirely the sport of the wind and the waves; like a nutshell, with which a child amuses itself; now the waves lifted it into the clouds, now seemed to plunge it again into the abyss.

As several djermes are every year lost on this coast, and as only a few days before two of these frail skiffs had gone to the bottom, I dreaded that we should share the same fate. Two of our Italian servants, who luckily were brought up to the sea, were obliged to hold me, to prevent me from falling out of bed. We were in a pitiable condition. None but those who have been at sea during a dread-

ful storm, in so slight a vessel as ours, can form an idea of what we suffered, fearing every instant that a wave would swallow us up, and experiencing that despondency which almost always seizes the mind at the sight of inevitable danger. It is in combating with the elements that man is most conscious of his weakness; notwithstanding all his moral power, he is not able to conquer this superior force; it is then that he implores a more mighty protection, and directs his thoughts towards Him who can command the fury of the storm.

As to myself, being in a very delicate state of health, which rendered me susceptible of melancholy impressions, and completely exhausted by the unceasing motion of the vessel, I soon lost all recollection. I do not know how long I continued in this state; for my husband, as great a sufferer as myself, was not able to stir. I was suddenly roused by

the air, and found myself suspended, as it were, between the earth and sky, in the arms of some Turkish sailors, who carried me from the djerma into the large vessel, which we had fortunately reached. They had much labour to get up to it; for at the moment they fancied that they had approached her, the wind drove our little boat far away into the sea; and it was not till after incredible exertions that they effected their purpose. After taking some repose, I experienced an indefinable sentiment of happiness, in seeing myself restored to life, at feeling warmth and motion in my veins, and finding myself restored to a place of safety, and surrounded with all the comforts and conveniences of European life. As soon as I had sufficiently recovered my strength, I resolved to examine minutely my new abode. It contained several spacious apartments; and the ship having been built in Sweden, was furnished with a degree of elegance.

I afterwards went on deck to see my menagerie, for I had been presented at Cairo with a beautiful ostrich, for which I had a large cage built. This poor creature felt itself quite out of its element, and seemed unable to accustom itself to the motion of the vessel; whereas my three gazelles, of which Ismael Gibraltar had made me a present, came leaping round me; one of them, pursued by a kind of hyæna which was on board, and had got loose, jumped into the sea, but was happily caught by an active sailor who plunged in after it. We had on board goats, sheep, chickens, and cats, besides five Arabian horses; all these animals mixed together, as in Noah's ark, afforded us a lively scene, and contributed to break the monotony of a long passage, which we had reason to expect at so unfavourable a season.

We were surprised at not seeing the Captain of the ship, and were told that he was gone to the fort of Aboukir, by order of the Command-

ant. We were exactly opposite to this fort, and nearly in the same place where the celebrated naval battle, gained by Lord Nelson, was fought. They showed us the position of the French fleet on that occasion, and the point at which Nelson commenced his attack.

The fort of Aboukir stands upon the ruins of the ancient Canope, so famous for its religious worship, and the frequent pilgrimages that were made to it. It was amidst the ruins of this town, that a gold plate, with a Greek inscription, was found a few years ago. It was covered with a composition of reddish glass, resembling purpurina, and was presented by the Viceroy to Sir Sidney Smith.

We distinguished the Turkish colours flying on the fort, and soon saw a boat put off from shore, and row rapidly towards the ship. It was our Turkish captain returning from his visit; but judge of our vexation and surprise, when he told us, that instead of sailing for

Europe, he was going to steer for the port of Alexandria, according to orders which he had just received from the commandant. We then learnt that the Greeks had taken and sunk three of the Pacha's ships; on board of which were some envoys from Constantinople, whom they had massacred; and that the Vice-roy, wishing for the present to avoid all aggressions of this kind, had forbidden his vessels to leave the port, and given orders to recall those which were on the coast.

This news was such as justly to alarm us; we were going back to Alexandria, which we had so much feared to approach; and being on board a Turkish vessel, to be exposed to immediate and continual communication with that infected city. Besides, we should be obliged to look for another vessel to convey us to Europe. How many unexpected events might arise in so critical a moment, when we heard nothing but rumours of war, and when the

minds of the people, in general, were inflamed against the Christians; all of whom they confounded with the Greeks.

The night passed in these melancholy reflections; and the following morning we weighed anchor, to steer to the place of our destination. We were again exposed, during this short passage, to a danger which had nearly proved fatal to us. The captain, not having reflected that we were still within the sand bank which renders this coast so hazardous, wished to take the shortest way, by going over this bank. The pilot, who was a Christian, in vain endeavoured to convince him of the risk which we ran; he persisted in enforcing the orders which he had once given; and would, doubtless, have abandoned us afterwards, like a true Turk, to all the consequences of his rashness, had not the pilot, with the sounding-line in his hand, demonstrated to him, that, as we had only eight or ten feet water, we should inevitably

be wrecked. This argument, which was unanswerable, at length triumphed over the captain's obstinacy, and he resolved to tack, and return to the point from whence we came. We then stood out for the open sea, and happily passed the sand bank.

When we arrived in the port of Alexandria, our first care was to look out for another vessel. We were unable to hold communication with any one on account of the plague; all our acquaintance shut themselves up in their houses: yet the worthy Mr. Anastasi, whom I have already mentioned in the first chapter of my Recollections, notwithstanding his retreat, was so good as to inquire after another ship, and it is to his kindness that we were indebted for finding one under Austrian colours. Several days transpired before our things could be carried from one vessel to the other.

During this time, we learnt that our captain and several of his sailors, who were all Turks,

notwithstanding their promise to the contrary, went every evening into the city, and in consequence of their system of predestination, mixed without reserve among the inhabitants. Nothing in the world can hinder a Turk from going in the evening to smoke his pipe in the coffee-house, and ours were in no wise disposed to renounce their favourite custom out of respect to the idle fears of some Christians, in spite of all our representations of the danger to which they exposed us, considering that the plague already raged in several Turkish vessels. We were at length released from these dangerous neighbours by removing to our Austrian ship.

With what pleasure did we anticipate the approaching moment of our departure, when we should be able to turn our backs on this infected place, which seemed then to be marked with the stamp of reprobation. Some arrangements on the part of our Captain, however, still retarded this wished-for period. At

length, every thing was completed, when, in the night preceding the day fixed for our departure, repeated discharges of artillery from all the forts announced some extraordinary event. In fact, these salutes were in honour of the arrival of the Pacha, who had travelled night and day from Cairo, to organize his fleet, and take the necessary precautions for the defence of his states. An incredible activity was immediately manifested in the port; an embargo was laid upon all the vessels, ours of course included. This was a thunder-stroke for us: it seemed as if we were never to quit this country. Like the warrior in the story, who, having been shipwrecked, found himself fixed, as if by enchantment, to a rock of loadstone, a fatal power seemed resolved to retain us against our will, on a coast on which death and desolation then reigned.

My husband earnestly solicited the Pacha to make an exception in our favour, and to

give us permission to depart; but this request, made by the European consuls in favour of the vessels of their respective governments, had just been positively refused by his highness, and he was of opinion that for this reason he ought not to grant it to us, adding, that he thought we had set sail long ago.

Our condition was thus truly unfortunate, especially as my state of health made me very desirous of returning to Europe. The Pacha seemed to feel for our situation, and wished at least to ameliorate it as much as lay in his power; he also sent to us his brother-in-law, Ismael Gibraltar, the admiral of his fleet, and minister of the marine, whose name has become well known by recent events, to induce us to leave the vessel, where we were very narrowly lodged, and to request us to take up our residence in one of his palaces, belonging to his son Ibrahim Pacha. My husband was very unwilling to agree to this; he at length

yielded to the repeated solicitations of Ismael Gibraltar, and going on board the long boat, we landed for the second time at Alexandria.

How different were my sensations on this occasion from those I felt on first landing in Egypt, nine months before! Now my mind was oppressed with a thousand melancholy forebodings; I found myself detained by political circumstances, on a spot which I had approached with my imagination filled with the agreeable prospect of all the wonders which I expected to meet with.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Palace of Ibrahim Pacha.—Ismael Gibraltar.—Politeness of the Pacha.

THE palace of Ibrahim Pacha in which we were to reside, is situated at some distance from Alexandria, on a tongue of land which stretches into the sea and separates the two ports. Not far from it are two other palaces; one of these is the residence of the Pacha, and the other that of his women. The whole of this tract is destitute of vegetation, arid and sandy, of an uniform greyish colour, which indicates the inactivity and the mourning of nature. The palaces on the sea-shore, built in a whimsical taste, have about them none of the accessaries which em-

bellish our European dwellings; even that of the women is surrounded only by a very high dead wall. Frequently, when casting my eyes towards that quarter, I commiserated the fate of those who were shut up in that dreary abode, which rather resembles a state prison than the residence of the wife of a Viceroy!

The fear of coming in contact with the plague, by sending into the town for asses to to take us to the palace of Ibrahim Pacha, had induced us to refuse them, so that we were obliged to go for a considerable distance on foot. It was the middle of the day, when the rays of the sun darted almost perpendicularly upon our heads, that Ismael Gibraltar came to fetch us. We sunk into the sand up to the ankle, and were besides obliged to ascend a hill on which the palace stood. Though supported by my husband and Ismael Gibraltar, my knees bent under me, and it was not without great fatigue that I was able to reach

my new abode. As soon as I entered it, I fell down quite exhausted on a broad divan, which ran along the wall of a large saloon, which was the audience-chamber of the young prince.

The coolness of this immense apartment was an agreeable contrast to the burning heat without. This palace, like all those built by the Pacha, in the style of architecture which prevails at Constantinople, is crowded with windows, which give to the interior of the rooms the appearance of a lantern; very fortunately, the one I speak of had blinds that admitted only a partial light which was very agreeable to the eye. We occupied this room in preference to the others, which were not so cool; it was to serve us as a drawing and dining-room, and bed-chamber; and as there was no furniture in the whole house except the large divans, we were obliged to content ourselves with such conveniences as it could afford.

Ismael Gibraltar, however, had the kindness to procure us a table, without which we should have been quite at a loss; and some furniture and utensils, which were fetched from on board the ship, supplied what was still wanting for the comfortable arrangement of our abode. The Pacha, not content with showing us hospitality in one of his own palaces, even offered to supply our table from his own kitchen, which we accepted with gratitude, as it was impossible to send our own cook into the city on account of the plague. Ismael Gibraltar regularly did the honours of the table in the stead of his master, and it afforded me much pleasure to see this Turk sitting opposite to me in his rich and magnificent dress, familiarized with our European customs.

Ismael Gibraltar has spent several years in Sweden, where he was sent by the Pacha on commercial affairs, as well as at Leghorn and Frankfort. He was about fifty years of age, of

a dignified figure, with fair blue eyes, an acquiline nose, and a mild and pleasing countenance. He was pretty conversant with Italian and French, and seems to remember with pleasure his visit to Europe. He told me that at a ball at Frankfort, several ladies had made him dance, and that he acquitted himself admirably—in short, he seems to have none of the prejudices of his nation. He has but one legitimate wife, and an only daughter, of whom he speaks with the most lively tenderness, residing in the environs of Constantinople, and from whom he has been separated for many years; he was thinking of sending for them to Egypt. During the absence of Mr. Boghos, he performs the office of dragoman to the Pacha, and shares with the former the favour of the Viceroy.

When evening came, I endeavoured by means of some muslin curtains, which I fastened to the wall, to contrive a sort of cabinet for sleeping, in one corner of the room. The

seclusion of this extensive palace, which was inhabited only by us and three of our servants, —having left the others on board to take care of our effects,—inspired me with a terror which I could not subdue; besides this, the vast saloon, destitute of furniture, in which our words and footsteps sounded as under a vault; the wind, which whistled through the galleries, and which at this season, and on the coast, generally springs up at sunset; the roaring of the waves, which dashed against the walls of the palace, and the noise of the great Egyptian rats, running in the night over our heads, and even entering our apartment without the least dread, as well as all the rest of the house which had not been inhabited for a long time, and you may form an idea of the unpleasant sensations which I experienced during these long nights, when I was unable to sleep.

In the morning, generally before six o'clock, I hastened down stairs to enjoy for a moment

the coolness and shade which were to be found at that time on one side of the house, the opposite front of which was towards the sea. This refreshing shade, which was all that was to be had on this barren coast, disappeared about nine o'clock, after which it was impossible to stir out. We walked up and down, waiting the arrival of our camel, which regularly brought us two bottles of fresh water, some wood, and buffaloes' milk; some stones placed in a kind of vault, served for a hearth and kitchen. I amused myself till breakfast, in watching the numerous ants, nearly an inch in length, which went backwards and forwards, carrying off crumbs of bread, and whose indefatigable activity made me reflect that Nature had endued them with strength, in proportion to their size, much superior to that of man; for wishing one day to follow their path, like that of the caravans through the deserts, I found myself extremely fatigued when I reached the end of

their journey, which was a hill of soft earth, where this little colony had dug numerous subterraneous passages, like those of the labyrinths and hypogeums of the ancients.

Sometimes too, I endeavoured to catch cameleons, which, with a simple curiosity, came and put themselves in our path, and, with the ants, were almost the only animals that we met with on this coast. I had had several of them in my possession, during my first stay at Alexandria: they are a kind of large lizard, of a mild and almost melancholy character. People like to have them in their rooms, because they catch the flies; their colour is a greenish grey, but I never had occasion to remark the property they are said to possess of changing their colour, which has given them such a wonderful reputation, and has even become proverbial. It is true that I was not able to make any continued observations on these animals, because they always found means to escape in a few days.

At the hour of dinner, some Greek servants came to bring the dishes from the palace of the Pacha. This was the first time that I became acquainted with Turkish cookery, for in the other houses in which I lived, there were Italian and Arab cooks. At the beginning they offered us splendid dinners, composed of fifty dishes, but we declined these repasts worthy of Lucullus, and contented ourselves with a much smaller number. I should have been anxious indeed to learn the resources of Turkish cookery, and to see how they would have managed if we had accepted their first offer, since the eight dishes, which they brought us every day for dinner, were exactly the same as those we had the day before. They were, indifferent soup, a dish of fish, a pillau, roast pigeons and fowl, a dish of bamich, (hibiscus esculentus,) a species of glutinous vegetable, of an agreeable taste, and some pastry, mixed with honey. Occasionally they brought us water-melons and

oranges, and one day, the Pacha had the politeness to send me a great piece of ice, which he had received from the high mountains of Asia Minor; we were very sensible of the value of this present, and immediately used it to cool our water, which was scarcely fit to drink.

Ismael Gibraltar came one day, and told me that the Pacha had inquired after me, and had ordered him to say, that he would have come himself to pay me a visit, if he were not obliged to respect certain usages and prejudices of his nation. I confess that I was agreeably surprised at this mark of attention, which I so little expected, and which was so very contrary to the manner in which the Turks generally behave towards my sex. I replied, therefore, that I had long since desired to see the regenerator of Egypt seated on the throne of the Soudans, whose genius and humanity were admired in Europe, but that I had learnt that custom and etiquette did not permit females to appear in

his presence. Ismael Gibraltar replied, that the Pacha would doubtless receive me with pleasure, if, like Lady Stanhope,* I would present myself to him in the Mameluke costume. Though my curiosity was very great, my natural timidity would not permit me to accept this proposal, and Ismael Gibraltar then told me, that the Pacha would endeavour to contrive to meet me on the promenade. In fact, the following day, the Pacha with a numerous suite, came

* This lady, who is a niece of the celebrated Pitt, has for a number of years lived in an ancient convent in Syria, the cells of which she has had changed into elegant apartments. In summer she goes to enjoy a cooler air on the heights of Mount Lebanon. As she speaks in perfection the Oriental languages, of which she was always extremely fond, she has acquired great authority in the country, and commands almost as a sovereign several tribes of Bedouins. It is said that she is on terms of friendship with several Pachas, her neighbours, and she came some years ago to Egypt, to visit the Viceroy. She constantly wears the Mameluke costume, and it was thus, riding on horseback by the side of the Pacha, that she witnessed the review of part of his troops.

to the side of the palace which we inhabited, but I was informed of it too late, for after he had taken a turn or two, he went back, and I did not see him till just as he was going away. He seemed to me not to be tall; my husband, who saw him very often, told me that he had a lively and piercing look, and animated countenance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Precautions against the revolted Albanians.—Shells.—Dr. Marpurgo.—The plague.—Departure from Alexandria.—Rhodes.—Meeting with pirates.

THE activity of the Pacha was most extraordinary. He was constantly engaged in forwarding the equipment of the fleet which was to be sent against the Greeks. Notwithstanding the fast of the Rhamadan, during which the Turks are not permitted to eat, drink, or even to smoke before sunset, we saw him from morning till evening occupied without interruption in the port. It appears to me, that the people of the South, and particularly the Arabs, are alone capable of enduring such privations;

while the natives of the North would be entirely discouraged by them.

Political circumstances suggested to the Pacha the same precautionary measures which he had before employed with success against the Wechabites. He assembled in a camp, in the environs of Alexandria, two thousand of the most turbulent and dangerous Albanians, of whom he desired to get rid by employing them on board the fleet destined to act against the Greeks. This undisciplined and fanatic soldiery had scarcely arrived when they inundated the quarter of the Franks, threatening to pillage the warehouses of the merchants. Fortunately, the Pacha being informed of it in time, was prompt in punishing the guilty, and thus suppressed this tumult in its beginning. Some years before, this corps of troops, which had formerly rendered important services to the Pacha, revolted against him, at the insti-

gation of the Court of Constantinople. He was even obliged to shut himself up in the citadel of Cairo, but this difficulty and critical situation did not discourage this great man; his active mind suggested to him a measure, to which, though rather extraordinary, he was however indebted for his safety. He commanded the troops which still remained faithful to him, to go through the city, and plunder the magazines and bazars. As soon as the Albanians, always greedy of booty, perceived this, they joined the supposed plunderers, forgetting to carry into effect their first plan. Meantime, the Pacha arrested the chief ringleaders of the revolt, on whom he exercised summary justice. The next day, order was restored in the city, the merchants were indemnified, and every body was satisfied. Soon afterwards, the war against the Wechabites furnished him with an occasion of getting rid of the remainder of this mutinous

corps, the greater number of which perished in the deserts of Arabia, and during the conquest of the Holy City.

Towards evening, when the wind did not blow with too much violence, we took a walk along the sea-shore; we generally made the tour of the little peninsula, at the end of which is a battery commanding the fort. The guard, which was composed of Albanians, had received orders not to molest us in this walk, which besides was prohibited on this side to the inhabitants of Alexandria, and curiosity alone sometimes attracted them to approach.

During these walks, we amused ourselves in picking up the shells which the waves threw in great quantities on this coast, and which present the greatest variety of colour and form. How admirable is the diversity of nature, even in the bosom of the ocean! The beauties and the wonders which this element conceals, are still more astonishing than those which are exposed

to view on the surface of the earth. Among the shells which I collected, there were twenty-nine kinds, of different forms, patterns, and colours. When we thus behold the works of creation, impressed with so many beauties, even those which are the most concealed from the eye, the activity of nature, constantly producing and ever varying,—peopling the air, the earth, and even the abysses of the ocean, with the same breath of life,—who can doubt that the Creator is the centre or focus of an infinite and mysterious goodness, from whence every source of existence flows, like those rivers, which descend from the inaccessible summits of the loftiest mountains, and which we know only by the benefits which they confer.

My health obliged me one day to have recourse to medical advice; we therefore called in one of the principal physicians of the Pacha, who enjoyed a great reputation and was chiefly employed in his harem. He was a Jew, of the

name of Marpurgo, and was a man of great ability and extensive knowledge. Having resided in Syria and Egypt for a number of years, he imparted to us some observations which he had had opportunities of making on the plague. He had accurately studied this disease, and he was persuaded that it was not communicated by the air, but only by contact. He was also convinced that the fears inspired by the imagination, render the body extremely susceptible of catching it, and he alleged as a proof of this, that having himself lost one of his children by the plague, he had not been attacked by it, notwithstanding the constant care he had bestowed on him till the last moment; but then he had never dwelt upon the idea of the danger to which he exposed himself. It is said that certain constitutions never contract it; others, who have recovered, have been attacked the second time: I myself knew a man at Cairo who had had it twice. Most commonly those who are attacked

die on the third day, in a high fever and delirium. The most trifling thing is capable of communicating this disorder; a pen, a thread, carried away by a bird, which we may touch by chance, are often sufficient to propagate it; and it is therefore not surprising that it makes such dreadful ravages in a country where religious ideas forbid the inhabitants from doing any thing to guard against it.

It generally declines during the violent heats, but it unhappily reigns at Alexandria the greater part of the year. The months of April, May, and June, are those in which its victims are the most numerous. We daily heard of the frightful ravages which this disease was exercising in the city. Notwithstanding the precautions taken by the Europeans, one third of the Christian inhabitants were carried off this year. It is quite a miracle that neither ourselves nor any of our servants were attacked, though we were constantly coming in contact

with Turks, and dined every day with Ismael Gibraltar, who inspected the fleet in which the plague was raging, as well as in the city, and who, like all Turks, placed little faith in the precautions which are generally taken to avoid it. Among other habits he used to sit down in his long robe upon our divan, instead of accepting the chair which we offered to him.

Dr. Marpurgo gave us some curious and amusing details of his visits to the harem of the Pacha. He was generally ushered into a kind of parlour. The ladies then came veiled to a wicket, through which they put their hands. The most comic affair, and the most difficult to be carried into effect, without offending the rules of decorum, was, when the doctor asked to look at their tongue. The veil was then sometimes drawn aside, and displayed their pretty faces to the eyes of the ravished doctor. He was even malicious enough to say that it was always the prettiest women who most fre-

quently pretended to be sick, and that he had little or nothing to do for the old and the ugly.

Towards the end of our stay in the palace of Ibrahim Pacha, several of our friends at Alexandria, braving the danger of contagion, had the kindness to come and see us; at length, in the month of July, after a forced residence of six weeks in this palace, we were informed that the Viceroy's fleet was going to sail, and that the embargo on the other vessels would be finally taken off. In fact, the Pacha, by a special favour, gave us leave to quit the port on the 15th of the same month, some days earlier than he had granted it to the other vessels, but we were detained by contrary winds till the 17th.

At length the long wished-for moment arrived; we bade adieu to Egypt, and its coast soon vanished from our view. At this season we had reason to expect a long passage, and

in fact the wind was almost always contrary. As we steered towards the port of Trieste, and the wind blew constantly from the north-east, we were obliged to laveer sometimes towards the coasts of Asia Minor, and sometimes towards those of Barbary. In this manner we left the isle of Cyprus to the right, and entered the gulph of Satalia, where we approached the land near enough to distinguish the habitations situated on the coast, which appeared to us to be well cultivated and wooded, and must supply Egypt with much wood for fuel.

We then tacked to return to the coast of Barbary; sailing continually in zig-zag, we steered towards Castelrosso, then for the island of Malta, and thence to the gulph of Macri, the coasts of which, once so flourishing, appear now unwholesome and depopulated. The modern town is built in the midst of the ruins of the ancient Telmessus, which extend along

the beach, and produce an admirable effect, as well as the lofty mountains which rise like an amphitheatre behind the city, and are constantly covered with snow.

Sailing in this manner across the Mediterranean, our progress was very difficult and tedious. We now approached Rhodes, and sailed along the southern coast of that island. Never shall I forget the ravishing and magnificent spectacle which then displayed itself to my view. The mountains of the island, whose bold outlines seemed to rise from the bosom of the azure sea, enveloped in a transparent and violet veil, shone with the most brilliant purple, and the glowing beams of the setting sun. A heat, resembling that of a furnace, was brought to us by the wind which blew from the shore, and this mild and balmy air was deliciously soothing: to breathe this air is enjoyment, and we readily conceive that the inhabitants of

the south, do not require, like those of the north, a refinement of pleasure which lavish nature offers them at all seasons of the year.

Thus reflecting the rays of the sun, Rhodes seemed still worthy to be his bride, as she was called in ancient times; accordingly we observe the image of that planet on almost all the old medals found in this island. It contained, as is well known, one of the seven wonders of the world, the famous Colossus, which, according to Pliny, was seventy cubits in height. It enjoyed much celebrity in various periods of antiquity, and in the middle ages was the residence of the Knights of the order of Saint John of Jerusalem, who received it from the Emperor Emanuel. It remained for above two centuries in the possession of this order, till Soliman II. conquered this bulwark of Christendom after an heroic defence on the part of the knights and their excellent Grand Master,

De Aubusson. This siege cost Soliman three hundred thousand men.

Some sailors, who had several times visited the Isle of Rhodes, told me that in one of the streets, which is still called the street of the knights, the habitations of these brave defenders of the faith are yet to be seen. The arms carved over the doors, point out their dwellings, most of which are now inhabited by beggars. What a change of scene is this! They still show at Rhodes the effigy of an enormous serpent, which killed one of the knights of the order, which has furnished the subject of a charming ballad, by the immortal Schiller, the Shakspeare of Germany. Seated on deck opposite the island, I could not refuse myself the pleasure of reading this poem, and I sighed when I reflected that this superb island, like so many others, is in the possession of the Turks.

We had lost sight of Rhodes, when on the

following morning we met three armed Greek vessels, with their new flag. They endeavoured to get to the windward of us, which it was easy for them to do, as they had the start of us and were better sailers. They soon after hailed us and asked to see our papers. We invited them to come on board, but they appeared to have no inclination to comply, and urged the captain of our vessel to go on board theirs. My husband forbade him; but having gone down into the cabin to inform me of what was passing, the captain seized this moment to go with fourteen of his crew on board the long boat, to the largest of the Greek vessels. We had then none left with us except the man at the helm, a cabin boy, two captains who were on board as passengers, and our servants.

We endeavoured but in vain to call back the captain; he continued to row till he had reached the Greek vessels. A great deal of conversation took place between them, and we saw the Greeks

by degrees put their arms into their boats. Several hours having elapsed since the departure of our captain, we began to fear that he would suffer from the malice of those people, and we called to him with the speaking-trumpet. The Greeks put themselves in motion with three armed boats, and in a few minutes they mounted on deck on every side. Our captain was however among them, which in some measure made us easy. They looked exactly like pirates, and were armed and dressed in the most grotesque manner. They demanded, in a haughty tone, ammunition and provisions, which my husband refused, having scarcely enough for the long voyage which we had still before us. They then inspected every part of the ship, conversed together, and looked at us in a menacing manner, yet hesitated what they should do. They again insisted on our giving them some provisions, but my husband declared that it was absolutely impossible to satisfy them in this

particular, notwithstanding the interest he took in their situation.

A sailor who spoke Greek then came and told us that he had heard them concerting together to carry our vessel by force into Castelrosso. My husband, who did not suffer himself to be intimidated by this threat, gave them to understand that they might easily get themselves into trouble by the slightest act of violence towards us; and that besides, no farther interest would be taken in their cause, if they paid so little respect to the flags of European powers. When they saw that nothing was to be obtained in this way, they again applied to our captain, who, either from fear or love of gain, consented to let them have a part of the provisions. After two hours passed in this manner, in very painful suspense, they left us and we were able to continue our voyage.

We learnt afterwards on our arrival at Trieste that these three Greek vessels were in reality

pirates, who, after having attacked and sunk several European vessels, had been in their turn pursued and captured by some English ships from Corfu, who inflicted summary punishment upon them. We were never able to understand by what happy chance they suffered us to escape. Perhaps our vessel, which had on board only antiquities, and but very few arms, the captain having sold the greater part of his cannons to the Pacha before he left Alexandria, did not appear to them a prize worthy of their rapacity, and sufficient to counterbalance the risk to which they would expose themselves by such an act of hostility.

CHAPTER XXV.

The tunny fishery.—Violent tempest.—Candia.—Fortress of Modon.—Zante.—Ithaca.—Saint-Maurice.—Corfu.—Arrival in the harbour of Trieste.

Hitherto we had had nothing but contrary winds or calms. Towards evening I generally went on deck, and my eyes wandered over the immense element, which reflected the azure vault of heaven. My thoughts were not fixed upon any determinate object, but were lost in a delightful uncertainty; no reveries are more agreeable than those in which we indulge while contemplating, during the stillness of a fine summer night, the expanse of the tranquil sea, unruffled except by the gentle breeze of the evening. The motion of the waves, sparkling

in the last rays of the sun, and breaking over each other, present an image of the fugitive days of life—sometimes clouded or brilliant, sometimes warmed by the vivifying rays of hope, or chilled by the blasts of adversity; like it they are swallowed up and lost in the great ocean of eternity.

Sometimes too I observed the dolphins, which surrounded our ship, and followed us for days together. This animal is from eight to twelve feet in length; perhaps the name of dolphin was bestowed on it for its perseverance in following vessels, in memory of the fabulous animal to which the ancients attributed a peculiar affection for the human race. It possesses, however, this quality in common with other fish, which are equally eager in seizing all kinds of refuse which is thrown into the sea; for we saw also sharks, from twenty to thirty feet in length, follow our vessel: all the other fish fled at their approach.

The sky, which was not obscured by a cloud, rendered the sea as transparent as crystal, so that I was able perfectly to distinguish the sharks, as soon as they approached the surface. Tunnies, much smaller, but whose silver scales produced a beautiful effect on the blue ground of the sea, sported round our vessel in cadence with the waves. We caught several of them, which we found to be very good eating. Our sailors employed the following mode to catch them. One of them placed himself at the stern, and threw a kind of harpoon into the sea, which was fastened to a cord; it was seldom that he drew it back, without piercing the side of one of these creatures.

The life one is obliged to lead on board a ship, is very monotonous; so that the slightest circumstance is interesting. We began to be weary of the calm in which we made little progress; when on the third day, after we had lost sight of Rhodes, an impetuous wind arose which

soon changed into a tempest. The sea rose in mountains, as if some formidable power heaved the foaming waves, which then sinking and violently breaking, dashed against the sails. The ship now lifted into the air, now plunged into the abyss, struggled in vain against the violence of this element.

I remained on deck in order to be able to throw myself more easily into the sea, in case the vessel should be wrecked; I held fast by one of the masts, for nobody, not even the sailors could keep their feet. The howling of the wind, and the roaring of the waves, drowned the voice of the captain; the creaking of the masts, the cries of the sailors, one of whom was nearly carried away by an enormous wave, which almost deluged the vessel; all these horrors which generally precede a calamity still more dreadful, did not, I can safely say, inspire me with any terror.

I was lost in the sublime spectacle which I

had before my eyes; never had nature appeared to me so magnificent, and the power of the Creator so awful. It was one of those sublime horrors, which nature sometimes produces, and which I had admired two years before in an opposite element, when I ascended mount Vesuvius during a pretty violent eruption one night in the month of December, when three torrents of burning lava descended from the mountain. I had then heard the shock of the elements resembling the report of thunder; I had seen the red hot stones impelled towards the calm and starry firmament; I had seen that burning torch, those clouds of smoke, those columns of fire, reflected in the Gulph of Naples. I know not why this scene recurred to my memory at the time that I admired the power and imposing majesty of the sea. I confess that I was foolish enough to thank destiny for having made me acquainted with this gloomy beauty of nature, which seem-

ed to place us more immediately under the protection of the Creator.

In four-and-twenty hours the storm began to abate; it had carried us past the Isles of Scarpanto and Caxo, and we were now opposite to Cape Solomon in the island of Candia. Our captain who was an old sailor, congratulated us on our fortunate escape, and assured us that in forty-five years' experience at sea he had never encountered so violent a tempest, particularly in a season which promised only calm weather. We learnt in the sequel, that (as well as three others which we met with in the course of this voyage) it was caused by earthquakes, so frequent in the Archipelago, and the shocks of which were felt in the Morea and even in Sicily.

One of our passengers was an old captain, a friend and countryman of the commander of our ship. This poor man had been ship-

wrecked some months before in nearly the same place where we had encountered the tempest. He pointed out to me the singular and arid rock which arose from the middle of the sea, and against which his ship was dashed to pieces. It was a remarkable circumstance that he and one of the sailors, who could not swim, had been saved; that is to say, cast by the waves on the coast of Candia, while all the rest of the crew, consisting of excellent swimmers, among whom was one of his brothers, had perished. I believe that in such a case the art of swimming is of no use, because human strength cannot contend with success against the violence of this element, and that the efforts which are made, serve on the contrary but to hasten our destruction, as is manifested by the example which I have just quoted. The grief of this poor man, who was advanced in years, greatly excited my compassion; he had lost every thing: not only his

cargo, but even his ship, which composed his whole fortune, acquired by a life of labour and exertion. In fact, when he showed me the fatal rock, the cause of his disaster, he could not repress his tears; yet he blessed Providence for having so miraculously preserved his life, which he was resolved to employ in consoling his afflicted family. Since his departure from the coasts of Illyria, they had had no intelligence from him, and were doubtless suffering the most cruel anxiety on his account.

We often approached near enough to the coasts of Candia to distinguish the culture of the country, and the white houses on the shore, partially concealed by groves of citron, myrtle, and cypress. We saw Mount Ida rising into the clouds, and reflected on all the metamorphoses which this land of fable has experienced since the education of Jupiter. Since the time when the wise Minos governed this island, it has has been successively transferred to the domini-

on of the Romans, then to that of the Saracens, of Genoa, Venice, and lastly to that of the Turks, under which it languishes, like every thing that is subject to their despotic sway. We cannot pass through these seas without a multitude of the charming fictions of ancient mythology presenting themselves to our imagination. The reader will not be surprized that I regretted being unable to land in the island, to look for the famous labyrinth, were it only in memory of the unfortunate Ariadne. Neptune awaked me in the midst of my poetical reveries by raising up a second storm, which drove us past Cerigotto, and we soon came in sight of Cerigo, the ancient Cythera, where the Goddess of Beauty is said to have first landed after rising from the waves.

A calm having succeeded the storm, we were unable to pass the strait which separates that island from Cape Matapan, the most southern point of the European Continent; and we were

obliged to sail a second time round Cythera. We passed close to the fortress of Modon, which was then blockaded by sea and land by the Greeks, and which now, after the lapse of nearly four years, still sustains this obstinate siege. We heard the firing of the Greeks, and saw the Turkish standard flying on the fort, like a fiery meteor presaging disaster and desolation. Where is the heart so destitute of humanity as not to feel interested in the cause of a magnanimous people, who, notwithstanding the tyranny and oppression under which they have groaned for so many ages, have just manifested all the heroic virtue, fortitude in adversity, elevation of soul, and sublime courage in the moment of danger, devotedness to the general cause, and inviolable attachment to religion, which makes them prefer martyrdom to apostacy and slavery? If, in spite of its efforts, it should sink in this glorious struggle, the pages of history and the voice of posterity will

avenge it for the indifference of its contemporaries.

After two days navigation we were in sight of the Strophades. The great heat and the bad vessels which our captain had provided, contributed to spoil the water, which was no longer fit to drink. He therefore sent a boat with casks to one of those small islands which was said to possess an excellent spring. In order to obtain from the Greek convent, to which the island belonged, permission to land, we sent a present of wax tapers. The boat soon returned with fresh water and excellent fruit, which the good fathers sent in return for the present we had made them. Their gift was extremely welcome to us, who had long been deprived of such refreshments.

On leaving the Strophades we sailed towards the island of Zante, and were soon at the entrance of the port of that town. This delight-

ful island reminded me of the view of Naples, when seen from the gulph, though on a smaller scale. Zante, like Naples, is built in the form of an amphitheatre; hills covered with vines, myrtles, rose-laurel, figs, oranges, pines and cypress, rise behind the town; numerous country-houses, scattered on the shore, abundant springs descending from the mountains, animate the landscape. All this luxury of nature is displayed before the charmed eye in the form of a crescent, and would be a most delightful subject for a panorama. It seemed as if Heaven was willing to suffer us to enjoy for a long time this beautiful prospect, for a dead calm would not permit us to advance. I confess, that the torment of seeing the ripe and purple grapes hanging on the treillage and the golden fruits of the gardens of the Hesperides, which shone through their dark foliage without my being able to touch them, seemed to me

equal to that of Tantalus; but, alas! the English who now possessed the island, have introduced such rigorous laws for the observance of quarantine, that before obtaining permission to land in this terrestrial paradise, it is necessary to undergo a purification of more than six weeks; and the finest fruits in the world appear bitter if they must be purchased at that price.

Near Cephalonia we met with a third tempest, which drove us towards Ithaca. The vessel narrowly escaped being dashed against that island, the aspect of which was rude and wild. Our fate resembled that of Ulysses, who, driven by a succession of tempests, wandered at random in these seas, without being able to revisit his household gods. We then tacked to pass Santa Maura, the ancient isle of Leucadia, so celebrated for the tragic death of Sappho. They still show, in that island, the remains of

the Temple of Apollo, built upon a promontory, from which unhappy lovers leaped into the sea. It is astonishing that our age, so fruitful in institutions of all kinds, has never yet thought of choosing some romantic spot, where hearts broken by ingratitude might find, as in the days of antiquity, all possible facilities for putting an end to their torment, unless we must attribute this neglect to the very simple reason, that love being now quite out of fashion, such a place would be wholly useless in our days.

On leaving Saint Maura, we soon came in sight of Corfu. I own I felt a particular regret at not being able to visit this island, for the revered memory of my paternal great-uncle, who preserved it for the republic of Venice. In gratitude for his services, a statue was erected to his honour in the island which he had so bravely defended. If it is ridiculous to be vain of a long line of ancestors, it is at least

allowable to be proud of their virtues and glorious deeds; I therefore transcribe with pleasure the following passage from a modern author,* who mentions my uncle, in speaking of an action which paints at the same time his military virtues and noble disinterested character.

"One man then rendered immortal services to the Venetians. His name recals to mind one of those traits which do honour to humanity, and which it is always good to place before the eyes of people and princes. In return for the conquest of several places, and the preservation of Corfu, the Count Von Schulenburg asked of the Venetian Government toleration for his brethren the Protestants. Never did warlike ambition aspire to a more noble object, or receive a more honourable recompence."

* Mr. Bignon, in his work "Sur les Cabinets et les Peuples."

We then entered the Adriatic, where we still encountered many dangers through the unskilfulness of our captain; but at length we arrived safe in the harbour of Trieste on the 25th of August, after a voyage of thirty-nine days.

THE END.

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